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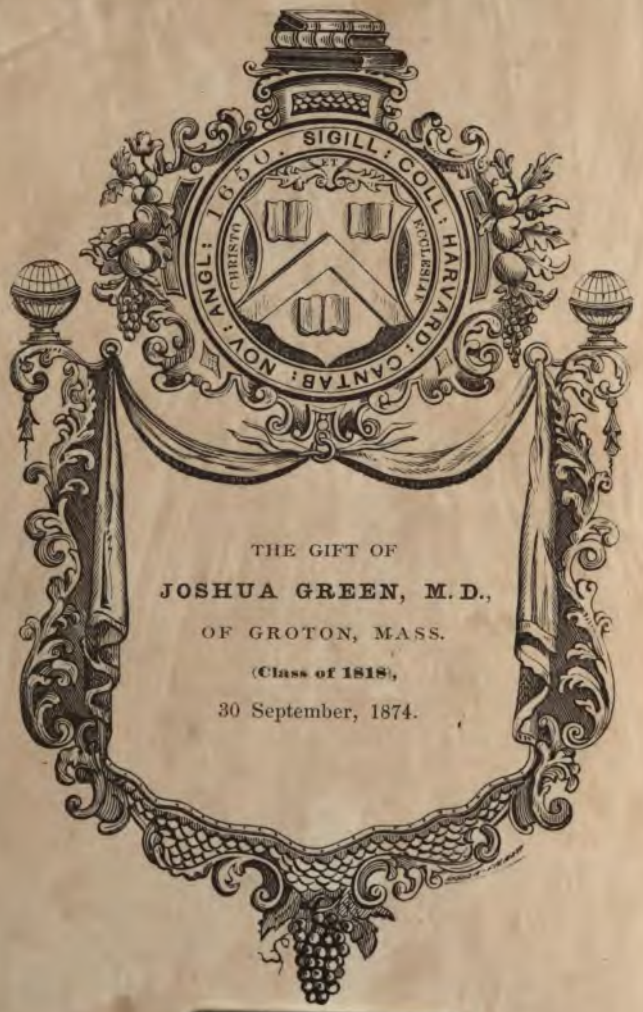

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BY

REV. JOHN HARRIS, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF "MAMMON," "UNION," "THE GREAT TEACHER," "THE GREAT COMMISSION," &c., &c.

WITH

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,

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INTRODUCTION.

When an author has been successful in gaining the attention of the public, that public have not only evinced an anxiety to derive instruction from whatever his pen has furnished, but to ascertain what may be known of his personal history, habits, and character. On this account it may be desirable that a few facts should be stated in connexion with a writer who has met with high acceptance from the Christian community of the United States, before whom a new volume of his works is now placed;—a volume, in its collected form, as yet unknown in Great Britain. The writer of this sketch having long enjoyed an intimate friendship with Dr. Harris, and been connected with him in matters both personally and relatively important, professes an acquaintance with his subject, and rejoices that he has a task in the performance of which he is exposed to but little danger of exaggerated statements. He trusts, that the time is very far distant, when the most important duty of the biographer,—that of detailing the private intercourse of the Christian and the author, and to present his character as a preacher and tutor—shall need to be performed.

A village, called Ugborough, near Modbury, in the county of Devon, gave birth to John Harris, in the year 1804. To wealth or worldly honour his parents had no claim. They were, however, esteemed for their correct moral, and Christian deportment. The father of our

friend now resides in the metropolis of Great Britain to enjoy the filial gratitude of his honoured son, and to rejoice, as a father and a Christian, in his success and his popularity.

While he was young, John Harris removed with his parents to Bristol, and was admitted to the Sunday school connected with the Tabernacle in that city. At this period of his life, I have reason to know that his ready obedience, amiable manners, and cheerful sociability, secured for him the high esteem of all who knew him. Nor were indications wanted, even then, of that brilliant genius, and that determined labour in the acquirement of learning, for which he has since become eminently distinguished. His love of reading was far beyond the power of his means to supply, and his society was most highly valued by those who best knew him. I have heard Mr. Harris relate, in his own playful and interesting manner, an account of a visit once paid to the Sunday school by the distinguished *Joseph Lancaster*, known in both hemispheres as an eminent instructer of the young, who, with a happy instinct, singled him out as the first lad of the school. It happened at that time that a *Mr. Bird*, a popular lecturer on astronomy, who, we believe, still resides in the neighbourhood of Windsor, was then lecturing on his favourite science at Bristol; and Lancaster, by a note still in existence, introduced his little friend to the lecturer, as one who would greatly profit by an attendance on his instructions. The lectures to which he thus listened, opened to his mind worlds, and systems, and facts, which astonished and delighted him, and contributed in no small degree to expand his understanding, and increase his thirst after knowledge.

Having given evidence of the power of religion on his heart, and become connected with the Christian church in whose Sunday school he had been taught the doctrines of

the Saviour, he entered the College at Hoxton, to prepare for the duties of the Christian ministry, in the year 1823, when scarcely nineteen. Here his character became more fully developed, and those who were most fully qualified to form a judgment, predicted that he would attain to no small eminence among his compeers.

Having completed his preparatory studies at this "school of the prophets," in 1827, Mr. Harris became the pastor of a small church of Independents, or Congregationalists, at Epsom in Surry. Here, surrounded by an affectionate and increasing congregation, he cultivated his personal religion, and acquired large stores of general and scriptural learning. His mind, equally capacious and clear, is remarkable for its readiness in apprehending truth in all its aspects and connexions; while blessed with a retentive memory, he never seems for a moment to forget what he has once known.

Beyond a very limited circle around Epsom, Mr. Harris was scarcely known for eight or nine years after his ordination; but all this time the Great Head of the church was preparing him for his present extensive and successful labours. In this secluded situation he wrote the manuscript of his "*Great Teacher*," which, after several disappointments, he was enabled to present to the world. The writer of this sketch will always remember, with devout gratitude to God, that he was selected as the agent to introduce the author to an acquaintance with the public through the press. This work was silently, but certainly, making a deep impression on the public mind, when an event occurred which at once raised him to the pinnacle of fame.

About the time of the publication of "*The Great Teacher*," Dr. Conquest, a Christian physician in London, offered a prize of one hundred guineas for the best

essay against the Sin of Covetousness, constituting the Rev. Dr. J. P. Smith and the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel the adjudicators. Mr. Harris, after carefully surveying the subject, determined to become a competitor; and though nearly one hundred and fifty persons were candidates with him, to the delight, but not to the surprise, of his most intimate friends, he carried away the prize. Of this work, nearly forty thousand copies have been sold in Great Britain, and about the same number in the United States. Its influence on the Christian world is already known to have been great, in increasing the funds of benevolent institutions; but I apprehend that its most eminent usefulness has yet to appear; for I have been personally assured by a professional gentleman of undoubted veracity, that he can testify to its mighty influence on the authors of wills, involving property to an amount which, if stated, would scarce be credited.

Shortly after the publication of "*Mammon*," the committee of the British and Foreign Sailors' Society in London offered a prize for the best essay on the claims of seamen to the regard of the Christian world; when Mr. Harris again became the successful competitor, and published his work under the title of "*Britannia*," having first received from his late majesty, William IV., a beautiful letter, authorizing the dedication of the volume to his majesty. This admirable work has also been republished in the United States, under the altered title of "*Zebulon*."

But we cannot now dilate, as we would, on his "*Christian Citizen*," his "*Witnessing Church*," his "*Union*," or the productions of his pen composing this volume; all these have combined with his previous labours to place him in the very first rank of theological authors. Nor has his eminence been at all lessened by the decision of Drs. Welsh, Wardlaw, and Bunting, and the Rev.

Messrs. Crisp and Melvill, that he was entitled to the prize of two hundred guineas for his essay on Christian Missions, published under the title of "*The Great Commission.*"

The theological chair at Cheshunt College having become vacant by the decease of the Rev. W. Broadfoot, the trustees of that institution, in 1837, presented to Mr. Harris a most cordial and unanimous request to occupy it. He acceeded to their wishes, and entered on his duties in the early part of 1838. Over this institution may he long continue to preside with the ability and success which have hitherto distinguished his career. In June of that year he became united in marriage with Miss Wrangham, of Epsom, a connexion of the venerable archdeacon of that name. This lady, every way worthy of the high station she filled, and who was beloved by all to whom she was known, has since, with her venerated uncle, passed to another state of existence; and it will become the duty and privilege of the reader, before he lays aside this volume, to peruse a short but deeply affecting sketch of her removal and character, from the pen of her bereaved husband. In September of the same year the College of Amherst, in the United States, (the president of which, the Rev. Dr. Humphrey, had republished his "*Great Teacher,*" with an able introduction,) conferred on Mr. Harris the degree of D.D.

As a *preacher*, no man in England is more popular than Dr. Harris. With a beautifully sweet and distinct voice, he unites a most attractive manner, and a style of delivery which commands general admiration, while the thoroughly evangelical character of his discourses makes them equally acceptable to believers in Jesus of every class. This is indeed evident from the fact that Christians of every denomination invite his services, and flock by thousands to the chapels where he preaches. The missionary societies

connected with the Independents, the Wesleyans, and the Baptists, have all sought and been favoured with his aid on their anniversaries.

We have already intimated that Dr. Harris's works have been republished in the United States, where they have attracted unprecedented interest.

It will be seen that in drawing up this account I have said but little in the way of eulogy. I would wish to allow facts to speak for themselves; Dr. Harris needs no flattery; nor even that friendship should convey its impressions to others through the medium of language. Many of the productions of his mind are before the public, let them proclaim his intellectual character; the ardent piety, and the disinterested generosity of his heart are best known to those who have been most intimately associated with him.

In introducing to the reader the volume now in his hands, it does not appear to me necessary to write more than a very few sentences. Each separate production will tell its own tale; in three or four instances I have intruded a short explanatory note on the attention of those who may be induced to examine the volume.

The *Sermons* have all of them been separately published, in London. The four first under the author's own revision, and the four last were carefully taken down, by eminent short-hand writers, as he read from his manuscripts in the pulpit. I have his own testimony that they are admirably correct.

As to the *Essays*, the far larger number of them were expressly written by Dr. Harris for insertion in a periodical which I conducted in London, and they were all printed from his own MSS. They were published anony-

mously, but excited universal admiration among the readers of the work referred to. One paper, included in this department was written for an American Annual a few years since, and three other short papers were taken from a periodical long since extinct, Dr. H. having distinctly acknowledged their authorship in communications to myself.

I have now only to express my hope for the favourable reception of this volume among American Christians, and to present my most fervent prayer that it may advance the glory of God. This, I am sure will gratify alike the author of the volume, and its Editor.

New York, May, 1844.

LONDON:

A SERMON

IN BEHALF OF THE CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION SOCIETY,* DELIVERED AT CLAREMONT CHAPEL, PENTONVILLE.

Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered. JEREMIAH viii. 22.

PAINFUL indeed is the situation of the patriot who is condemned to watch the expiring struggles of his country—to see, one by one, the symptoms of its political life disappear, till at length it lies prostrate in corruption, an easy prey to its weakest foe. But here is more than a patriot called to mourn over the approaching desolation of his land, and to witness the frustration of all his endeavours to save it; here is a distinguised saint constrained to recognise, in all the

* It is scarcely necessary to detain the attention of the reader from the perusal of the following Sermon, for a moment, to describe the character of the society before whom it was delivered. It has existed for about twenty years, consists almost entirely of Congregational and Baptist Christians, and is designed to disseminate Christian knowledge among the poor, by the regular circulation of tracts on the loan system, the establishment of prayer meetings, the visitation of the sick, the encouragement of Sabbath schools, the distribution of the scriptures, and the preaching of the gospel; its agency is partly of a clerical and partly of a lay character; some of these agents devote their whole time to this service, and receive a moderate remuneration, but the far larger number of them find their present reward in their labors, and hope for a future recompense in the approbation of the adorable Redeemer. Abundant and increasing success has hitherto been vouchsafed to the disinterested, unceasing, and prayerful efforts of the Institution.—ED.

signs of impending calamity, the signs and proofs of his country's guilt. He could not forget that Judea had for ages been the ark of religion, where the knowledge of God had been preserved when lost by all the world besides. He thought of its temple, where prophets had uttered the burden of the Lord—where the bleeding sacrifice had daily testified of human guilt and Divine forgiveness—where successive generations had communed with God from off the mercy-seat, and multitudes had found the gate of heaven. But these recollections, pleasing in themselves, were embittered by the remembrance of the guilt which they recalled, ages of accumulated guilt; for, which of their prophets had they not persecuted, and where was the idol-god which they had not attempted to set up?

And here is not only the patriot lamenting the dangers of his country, and the saint bewailing its guilt; here is also the prophet called to gaze on the scene of its coming destruction as if it were actually present. He sees the Chaldean foe approach, hears the tramp of their myriads, beholds Jerusalem beleagured, bleeding, lost—her temple in ruins, her dwellings of holiness all laid waste, while the piercing shriek of her expiring lament, mingling with the thunder of Almighty wrath, proclaims that her doom is sealed, and that the hand that smites her is from heaven.

But that which completed the anguish of the prophet was, that his nation should thus perish with all the means of recovery at hand. True, it was morally diseased, fearfully so; but so it had been from the beginning, had been so in common with the whole world out of which it was taken. Indeed, the scriptural view of its peculiar economy is that of a temporary remedy applied to a portion of diseased humanity, till the grand Gospel specific should come for the whole. Judea was the moral hospital of the earth; its inhabitants were God's patients; its ritual was his divine prescriptions. As many as scripturally availed themselves of it, acknowledged its efficacy, and found a

cure. Even the diseased of other lands, who sincerely sought admission, were received, and welcomed, and had reason to rejoice in the healing process. True, the spiritual malady of the people had now assumed the most aggravated from—the patient was apparently approaching dissolution; but well the prophet knew that the Jewish institute retained all its remedial virtues unimpaired; that, if rightly employed, it could still ameliorate even their condition; that, confidently as they relied on their far-famed balm of Gilead as a specific for certain bodily ailments, still more confidently might they rely on the heavenly efficacy of this moral balm to restore them to political soundness and religious health; and knowing this, yet seeing them perish within reach of the remedy, he uttered the exclamation, in which all his soul came forth, "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

This is the patriotism of true religion. How different from that plausible modification of selfishness which often assumes the name! While *that* occupies itself chiefly in forging fetters for *other* lands, *this* is principally intent on promoting the moral vigour and freedom of its own. *That* sees no cause for alarm except in a threatened invasion, a civil war, or some temporal form of national distress; in the absence of all these, *this* distinctly sees in the permitted existence and the silent increase of moral evils, the gathering of a foe more to be dreaded than any army which earth could muster. As long as the laws of the land are generally obeyed, *that* congratulates itself on the soundness of the nation's health: but if, notwithstanding this plausible sign, political expediency be allowed to carry it over truth and right—if the two extremes of society, the highest and the lowest, unite in the desecration of the Sabbath and the disregard of religion—if the great bulk of the people are left uninstructed in the laws of the Divine government, *this* beholds in such a state of things the certain symptoms

of a deep-seated disease, corroding the vitals of the political body, and threatening its dissolution. *That* relies for security and prosperity chiefly on its martial forces and its resources of wealth; but *this*, remembering how many a nation has perished while in the full possession of such expedients, regards a nation's morality as its greatest wealth, and a standing army of social and religious virtues as its strongest bulwark. And hence, in seeking the recovery of a nation's health, while the one confines its attention exclusively to temporal expedients, and expects every thing from them, the other still sees a refuge left in God after all these have failed, and instead of abandoning itself to despair, takes up the language of the tenderest expostulation, and exclaims, "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

In reference to the nation primarily addressed, this language implies the following things: That there is a sense in which it was to be viewed as one collective being, and hence it is spoken of as a person, a single individual; that this moral agent was labouring under an alarming moral disease; that for this disease there existed an adequate remedy; that for the neglect of this remedy no justifiable reason could be assigned, so that the conduct of the nation was inexcusable, and involved the highest guilt; but that it was yet the duty of such as saw and felt these truths to seek the recovery of that patient to the last, pointing her to the remedy, and remonstrating with her on the guilt of her continued neglect.

But while the passage implies all this, its point and pathos consist chiefly in its remonstrative tone on the utter inexcusableness of the party addressed for persisting in the neglect of God's remedy. As if the prophet had said, That you require a remedy of some description is obvious; you know that the foe is gathering on your borders; the very fact of your seeking the alliance of Egypt proclaims your sense of weakness and danger, while the numerous vices which have be-

come national, and which are the cause of the impending evil, proclaim "that the whole head is sick, and and whole heart faint." But, deplorable as our condition is, it is not hopeless. Is there any truth in our sacred books? Read them, and you will find that never have we been reduced to a state of exigency like the present, but by disobedience to God—never relied for deliverance on an arm of flesh, but we have been disappointed—never repented and returned to God, but we have been pardoned and have prospered. Is there any meaning in that temple? It is the residence of the Great Physician. Any blessing denoted by that sacrifice? It represents the very medium of our forgiveness, the balm which shall give life to the world. Why, then, while you admit that our state is perilous—why, when the great and only remedy is before you—when so many among you are divinely appointed to recommend and enforce it, and when you know that to neglect your office is to let the nation perish, to involve the name of God in dishonour before the heathen, to incur his dreadful displeasure, to destroy immortal souls—why, in the name of that God whose prophet I am, "why is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

Brethren, this remonstrance did not lose its applicability with the occasion on which it was at first uttered. It continued to reverberate age after age in the ears of the Jewish people, till it reached its deepest pathos in the weeping lamentation of Jesus over Jerusalem; and till the impassioned desire of Paul to be made an anathema for their salvation, proclaimed that the sun of their dispensation had set in a long dark night. In the Christian Church it has gone on gathering emphasis and strength with the growing and guilty apathy of each successive age, till in our own times it has acquired a startling power, which has awakened numbers to a sense of their sinful neglect of the multitudes perishing around them, and which, by the Spirt of God still accompanying it, shall soon arouse the entire Church. It is addressed, indeed, to the people generally; but to

those whose office it is, instrumentally, to instruct and save them especially. Such is the duty of every Christian, and of every Christian Church. Let them proceed to their respective posts; and, if *there* their message of salvation meets with neglect, they may remonstrate with the people in the spirit of the text. But till they themselves are thus alive to their duty, the prophet may be regarded as remonstrating with *them*. Oh, with what startling effect might he bring down the expostulation upon us—upon the Christians of this country—the Churches of this city! "You admit," as if he should say, "that your lot is cast in the midst of multitudes perishing in their guilt—in your prayers to God you acknowledge it—in your conversations with each other you deplore it. You admit that for this disease in its most virulent form there is an infallible cure—that you yourselves are monuments of its efficacy. You admit that you hold this remedy from the great Physician expressly to administer it to the dying around you—and you admit that while such administration could not fail to be attended with the most salutary effects, the withholdment of it must as certainly be followed by the most fatal consequences—and believing all this, meeting together as you do from time to time avowedly on the ground of this belief—why, in the name of the Great Healer of immortal souls, why is not the health of the daughter of *your* people recovered?"

I. Now to such a remonstrance what reply could be given? For, first, on your own admission, it could not be pleaded that the moral disease which pervades the hundreds of thousands around you is not very *apparent*, or, though apparent, not very *alarming*, in its nature and consequences. You have read of the dreadful pestilence which in 1665 swept off more than a hundred thousand of the inhabitants of this city. You have read of the appalling aspect of those dwellings which contained infected inmates—of the large red cross painted on their doors, together with the words, "Lord, have mercy upon us!"—there to con-

tinue till the lawful opening of such houses. You remember that examiners, searchers, surgeons, and buryers, were appointed in every district—that a cart went its rounds every night and morning to receive the dead —that the driver, sounding his knell at the door of each infected dwelling, exclaimed, " Bring forth your dead" —that the dead, brought forth and cast into the cart, were then conveyed to pits of immense size and depth, where all lay shroudless and mingled together. You remember, that though at first the shrieks of women and children resounding from the abodes of the dying and the dead were so frequent as to appal the stoutest heart; yet, that, subsequently, when death had become familiar to their eyes, and despair had hardened their hearts, they felt little concern for the loss of friends, and often left them to perish alone—that though at the beginning of the pestilence the churches whre crowded with alarmed suppliants, latterly, they were comparatively deserted—that multitudes, resorting to taverns and places of infamy, endeavoured to conquer their terrors by debauchery and drunkenness; while their riotous outcries and songs mingled fearfully with the sounds of lamentation and woe. The whole nation wept for the miseries of her metropolis.

Brethren, this is still " the city of the plague." As then, you will find its examiners and searchers, its surgeons and buryers, in its courts of law, its magistracy, and its army of police. As then, you will find its pits and receptacles for the dead, in your crowded jails and places of punishment. As then, you will find that while many of its churches and chapels are but thinly attended, resorts of an opposite character are thronged. In the pestilential air of your prisons, where the virtue which was only tainted almost invariably expires—in the impure atmosphere of your larger theatres, whose attendant licentiousness is so well known, and whose *direct, stipulated profits* from that licentiousness are so considerable, that one of them lately desisting from the infamous traffic, was praised as all but a martyr to morality—in the ruinous effects

of your penny theatres, those "infant schools" of vice, where so many thousand children learn to lisp in blasphemy and to mimic licentiousness—in the demonising influence of your "Hells," where the beings who enter in the semblance of men return with the impress of fiends—in the drunken delirium of your gin palaces, so rapidly multiplied of late to receive the swarming throngs of the diseased—in all these you find, as then, convincing proofs not only that a plague is among you, but that it has spread so widely and continued so long, that thousands have reached that fearful stage in which their only concern is to vanquish their terrors, and forget themselves.

But, oh, were the city to put on at this moment an aspect answering to its moral condition—were the plague of sin to disclose itself by signs as fatal as those of that physical plague, the most dismal scenes of that day would be gladness itself compared with the spectacle of woe which would forthwith appear! Would not some present expire before they left this house of prayer? When we went forth by and by, could we expect to hear any other sounds than those of lamentation and woe? Would it not be a night more to be remembered than that in which the first-born of Egypt were slain? and, when the morrow dawned, where could we find a street, many of whose doors did not bear the red cross of death? Where could we direct our steps without hearing the appalling cry, "Bring forth your dead?"—without finding whole ranges of buildings, now the abodes of the living, suddenly changed into the sepulchres of the dead?—and the numerous vehicles, now crowding your great thoroughfares, all put in requisition as the vehicles of mourning and death? Oh, how many more than a hundred thousand would be swept away; and what must be the lamentation equal to so vast a spectacle of woe?

Brethren, this calamity, *in its substance*, is not imaginary, is not distant. The plague is here—is upon us! This is its metropolis—and here it reigns—reigns

unto death! Those fearful visitations which men call plagues, and all those other diseases which sweep off generation after generation, are only the servants of that greater plague of which we speak—they merely do its bidding on the body, but this strikes down and destroys the immortal soul. It walketh in darkness, and wasteth at noonday. Within a time, comparatively short, a thousand have fallen at your side, and ten thousand at your right-hand—fallen where it is fearful to follow them even in thought! And other thousands have the plague-spot on them—must they fall too? Is there nothing by which the plague may be stayed? Why then is their spiritual health not recovered?

II. Secondly, it cannot be alleged, in excuse, that there are any insuperable *obstacles connected with the remedy.* What obstacles can be imagined? a want of freeness? it is offered without money and without price. A want of suitableness? it is the minutely adapted provision of infinite wisdom—it leaves no part of our nature unhealed; following the moral disease through every vein it has envenomed, it produces a new creature in Christ Jesus. A want of universality? it comes addressed to "every creature"—to "Whosoever will"—to the entire race. A want of efficacy? it is the power of God—"the power of God unto salvation."

The prophet did not doubt even the healing sufficiency of the Mosaic dispensation. He took it for granted, that as long as that heavenly balm continued, the nation had only scripturally to employ it, in order to rejoice in its sanative power. What shall we say then to the superior efficacy of the Gospel dispensation? It retains all that was permanent in doctrine and morality under the former economy—it has taken up and appropriated to itself every thing belonging to that departed church, which was essentially good—and has given it additional value by bringing it into the presence of the Cross. For its earthly temple, the Gospel has given us the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man—for its mere animal sacri-

fices, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world—and for its dying priesthood, an Advocate who ever liveth to make intercession for us. It was the conviction of this immeasurable superiority which inspired the Apostle from the very moment he became acquainted with it, with his lofty confidence in its success. Even before its excellence had been extensively put to the proof—from the very beginning—so satisfied was he of its all-restoring efficacy, that nothing would evidently have delighted him more than the possibility of collecting the world together, and of trying it on all the race at once; but that being impossible, he appeared impatent to discover the spot where the disease of sin was most active and virulent, in order that *there* he might make triumphant proof of the Gospel remedy. And where was that spot likely to be found, but in a city, and that city the metropolis of the world? "Well," said he, "as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." "What means," as if he had said, "its glorious gift of Christ? but that it has power to melt all hearts—compassion to embrace all mankind? What means the Cross, but that its blood cleanseth from all sin? What means its accompanying Spirit, but that it shall convince the world of sin? What mean its promises of success, but that every land shall resound with its triumphs, and every shore be adorned with the living monuments of its saving power? And what means my own conversion—I, who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious—who was "the chief of sinners"—what, but that in me Jesus Christ would show forth all long-suffering—would demonstrate to the world that he is able to save unto the uttermost, and will perpetuate the triumphs of his grace, till the world shall be saved?"

But, if such was the confidence of the apostle in the efficacy of the Gospel, what should be ours, now that it comes down to us sealed and attested by the expe-

rience of ages and generations? Restricted as it has been in its operations by the selfishness of its professed friends—corrupted as it has been by the ignorant and the worldly—maligned and resisted as it has been by its enemies, who has yet ever received it without finding salvation? or where has it ever been carried without leaving behind it a blessing? What tears has it wiped away—what bleeding hearts has it staunched and healed—what injuries and evils has it arrested and prevented—what hopes has it kindled—what joy diffused! Viewed on the large and comprehensive scale of ages, what happy families has it created—what examples of excellence has it given to society—what equity to law—what activity and amplitude to benevolence—what blessings has it showered on earth—what a multitude has it glorified in heaven!

And is it possible that this remedy for the world's maladies is still in existence? It is at this moment in our possession. And is its original efficacy unimpaired? Assemble the thousands around you and try. Oh, were it possible for you not merely to collect *them*, but to collect and concentrate the moral diseases of the whole in the person of one man, could you doubt the issue when you reflect that the balm is the precious distilment of the heart of infinite love? And is it possible that, with this balm intrusted to our administration, there are souls around us to whom we have never spoken of its virtues, and on whom we have never pressed its acceptance? Brethren, had there lived a man in this metropolis during the reign of that dreadful plague of which we have spoken, who knew of some simple remedy, but who yet could listen to the continued wailings of the neighbourhood around him, and see his fellow-citizens swept off by thousands into the grave, without showing any concern to impart it, should we not have spoken of him to-night as a monster? and would he not have gone down to the latest posterity as a reproach to the species? And yet if sin be that plague in a form as much more dreadful as the immortal spirit is more

precious, and capable of a destruction more terrible, than the body—and if the Gospel be that simple, sovereign remedy; and if we, holding it in our possession, can yet admit that the pestilence is raging around us without doing our utmost to arrest it, can our guilt be less than his? must it not be proportionally greater? Then who shall attempt to compute its amount? Or what inquiry can be more appropriate and urgent than this, "Why is not the health of the daughter of your people recovered?"

III. It cannot be replied in palliation, thirdly, that we are under *no obligation to attempt this recovery.* The construction of the text implies that the duty is even prior to any command and independent of it, being founded in the very nature of things. The inquiry, "Is there not balm in Gilead, and a physician there?" implies, that if there be, our bare knowledge of the fact, without waiting for any express authority, carries with it an obligation to make it known, the neglect of which involves us in tremendous guilt.

This obligation arises partly out of our community of nature and interests—a relationship by which the entire race, instead of consisting of a multitude of detached and isolated individuals, is formed into a family so closely united by reciprocal ties, that the well-being of each is connected with the good of all. And hence, partly, our obligation to preach the Gospel to every creature; for to every creature are we related.

But besides this obligation arising out of the common rights and mutual claims of humanity, God is pleased, in his moral government of the world, to deal with the several nations, cities, and civil societies into which it is distributed as so many distinct moral agents; and hence, each one sustains relations and responsibilities to the members of its own body, additional to those which it holds in common with all the rest, and peculiar to itself. The subjects of the same government, for instance, or the inhabitants of the same city are viewed, not merely as united in time

and place, but as forming one collective being. This, indeed, is suggested—we do not say intentionally implied—by the personification in the text, in which a whole people is spoken of as one person—for, though the language is figurative, the idea is founded in reality. The Almighty appears to deal with such a collective agent, as we may suppose he would deal with an accountable being who should have no existence hereafter—Divine retribution is dispensed to it in this life. As the effects of sins committed at one period of life are often felt at a subsequent period, so the depraved condition of a civil society in one age of its existence —for its whole duration is but one continued life—is visited with the evil consequences in a later generation. And as it is impossible that one member of the human body should suffer without all the members suffering with it, so is it that one part of a corporate society should be morally diseased without all the other parts sharing in the attendant evils. By a regard, therefore, to your own welfare—to the welfare of those who are the dearest to you—parts of yourselves—to the welfare of your children's children to the latest posterity—the obligation is laid on you to minister to the infected and infectious society in which you are living, the appointed means of purification and health. As you could not hear that a contagious disease had sprung up in your neighbourhood without feeling that all your family were endangered, look on the moral contagion around you as involving the entire community of which you are a member in special danger, and exposing you at least to temporal suffering.

To complete the obligation, however, the will of Christ has made it *authoritative and divine.* Do you ask where and how he has expressed that will? Not merely by commands to be found in almost every page of his Gospel, and which require us to love our neighbour as ourselves. Not merely by the authority of his own example in weeping over the metropolis of his own land, and labouring with untiring benevolence for its recovery. But also by the diffusive na-

ture of the Divine remedy itself, by which it no sooner takes effect on an individual, than he feels himself impelled to proclaim its virtues to others, and to enforce its acceptance. And still more, if possible, by the Divine constitution of the Christian Church. Having composed it of such as have themselves made proof of the healing remedy, and furnished them with the means of complete recovery and eternal life, he requires them to act as a body organised and appointed for the recovery of others. Every church in this city is the Divine dispensary of the neighbourhood in which it stands—the Gilead of the district. It is planted there, not merely for the convenience and advantage of its own members, but, also, that all the inhabitants around may be brought under cure. In prosecution of this high object, it is not to wait for applications from without. In imitation of Christ, it is to *seek* that it may save that which was lost. In imitation of his Apostles, its members are to go from house to house, making manifest the savour of Christ —diffusing the fragrant odour of the healing balm—in every place. All the means of spiritual recovery are in their possession, and from the first moment of their existence as a Church, they are required to employ them. All the population of that district are placed under their special ministrations; and as long as a single soul remains in ignorance of Christ, they are to ply those ministrations to the utmost, or to find themselves subjected to the charge implied in the startling interrogation, "Why is not the health of that soul recovered?"

IV. It cannot be pleaded in mitigation of this charge, that, although convinced of our obligation to promote the spiritual health of our community, *we are distracted by the conflicting claims of various remedies.* The text implies that there is but one remedy, and that there cannot be another—that the obligation to employ any remedy, and to employ this, is identical.

We are aware, indeed, that, in the present day, re-

ligion has numerous competitors for the honour of improving mankind; that civilization and law, political economy, and secular instruction, forgetting their total failure as a remedy for human misery during the thousands of years in which they had the world to themselves; forgetting, that however useful they may be in their several subordinate departments, their utility can never extend beyond those limits, but by their becoming the handmaids of that Divine religion whose sphere is the universe and eternity; and forgetting that the moral progression of society of late, is owing, not to their influence, but to the operation of that religion; forgetting these things, they flatter themselves, that could they but be left to work alone, they should need no higher aid in order to renovate society, and make the world happy. But if the malady of sin has fallen upon the moral and immortal part of our nature, they possess not one quality of a remedy. If to leave the heart untouched, is to leave the man unhealed, they can have no pretension whatever to be regarded as a balm. At best they can but heal the hurt of the daughter of a people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. At best they are but palliatives; but, like most other mere palliatives, they subsequently aggravate the disorder they pretended to cure.

Science, for instance, taken by itself, has no tendency whatever to moral improvement. Such improvement can only result through the medium of *conscience;* by the agency of something which shall appeal to our *hopes and fears;* by a *moral* influence. But what connexion is there between the mechanical science and morality? How can a vicious heart be cured by lectures on geology? If no one expects to learn astronomy by studying botany—if no one expects to learn it even by studying religion—why should any one expect to learn religion, or to be able to dispense with religion, by studying science? The instruction of a community in worldly science can, at best, but multiply its *mental and social resources*, and thus cor-

rect its taste for some of the grosser forms of sensuality. But ask ancient Greece and Rome, and modern France, the direction in which it tends, unguided by revelation, and you will find that it leads through atheism to destruction. However simple the early character of a people may be while struggling to establish their political existence, survey the whole compass of history, and say, in what instance has a progress in arts, and science, and commerce, and attendant wealth, unaccompanied by religion, failed to increase the luxury and licentiousness, the arrogance and selfishness of a people, and thus to seal their doom? Investigate the claims of civilization, and you will find that it is but just beginning to ascertain them itself. The most distinguished writer on civilization of the present day* commences with the inquiry, which lies at the very basis of the subject before us, "Is society formed for the individual, or the individual for society?" and pronounces that one of the greatest philosophers† has thus resolved the question: "Human societies are born, and live, and die upon the earth; there they accomplish their destinies. But they contain not the whole man. After his engagement to society, there still remains in him the more noble part of his nature. We have each a separate and distinct existence, are endowed with immortality, and have a destiny higher than that of states." Yes, civilization and government must disclaim the power of reaching the soul. All they can accomplish, at best, is to restrain the eruption of its disease when it endangers the social health, and to develope other counteracting qualities likely to maintain that restraint. This is their *best*. History, alas, finds it abundantly easier to furnish illustrations of their *worst*—to show us that human government, apart from the influence of religion, aye, and in defiance of that influence too, can itself cater for the most morbid appetites of a people, up to the very point of social danger—that it can itself legalise immorality, and sell

* Guizot. † De Royer Collard.

the Sabbath, and open a thousand Hippodromes, provided the people will be content with destroying themselves, without destroying it—that it can persist in bartering away the morals, the rationality, the very bodily health of hundreds of thousands of its subjects, provided the sale of the liquid fire that inflicts these evils continues to swell the revenue.

Well, then, may we appropriate the language of the context, and inquire, "Is not the Lord in Zion? is not her King in her? Why have they provoked me to anger with strange vanities?" To think of making any expedient of human device a substitute for the Gospel, is the highest provocation which man can offer, or God receive. Did you cousult only the *temporal* welfare of the community in which you dwell, the speediest and most effectual method of promoting even *that*, would be to give them the Gospel. It moralizes every society which it enters. Even when it does not convert a people, it arrests the progress of vice, denounces oppression, awakens compassion for the wretched, asserts the supremacy of law, elevates the public standard, and thus lays a foundation for civil improvement and social happiness. But you profess to design their *spiritual* welfare—and for this the Gospel is the *only* means. *Here* there can be no competition, no rival, no question. Compared with its wisdom, every other system is foolishness, for it is the wisdom of God. Compared with its power to sway the heart, all other strength is weakness, for it is the power of God. Its light alone can pierce the darkness of the soul. Its influence alone can break the chains of sin, and turn the heart, the house, the city, once devoted to Satan, into a habitation for God through the Spirit. But the Gospel can do this. It taught chastity at Corinth—humility at Athens—humanity and holiness at Rome—and converted even the jail at Philippi into a Christian church. And what it has done it can still repeat. Its Author is the appointed Healer of a diseased and a dying world: only let its saving health be diffused, and, like a heavenly

current of vital air, it will sweep over the spiritual sickness of *your* city, imparting life, and health, and universal happiness.

V. Fifthly, It cannot be pleaded, that, though convinced that the Gospel is the only remedy for the afflicted community in which we dwell, *we are at present engrossed by more important claims at a distance.* It is to the honour of Christians—or, rather, of the God whose quickening influence has graciously aroused them from slumber—that no object of Christian philanthropy is at present deemed too vast to be attempted, no enterprise too distant to be approached. With an enlargement of design worthy of their Christian name, they are free to avow that their field of action is the world, and that their object is to reclaim that world to Christ. Nor would we utter a syllable the tendency of which should be to contract that sphere of labour by a single line, nor call off their attention from any part of it for a single moment, except for the purpose of so engaging it during that moment as to send them back to it again, with increased fitness and greater devotedness than ever. No: every Christian present stands related to the whole race. The cross vibrates to the sounds of human misery in every part of the earth, and his heart is to thrill in sympathy with it. As a representative of Christ, he is to regard himself as the centre of all that misery, and his heart is to beat with the godlike desire of relieving the whole. But in yielding to that impulse, he is to remember that there is *an order* in which his benevolent efforts are to be made—*an order of nature*, by which those who are the most nearly related to us have the first and strongest claims on us—*an order of providence*, by which we are enabled to administer the means of salvation to those who are placed near us at less expense, and in greater variety and abundance, than we can to those who are more remote from us —and that this order of nature and providence is also *the order of Scripture*, since the apostles themselves, "*beginning* at Jerusalem," were to work from that

centre outwards to the ends of the earth. The relative duties of the Christian, then, may be said to lie around him in concentric circles; and as the first circle immediately around him includes those most nearly related to him, nothing will excuse him for neglecting that inner circle for an outer, however much larger that outer circle may be. If the order of nature, and providence, and scripture, should also be the order of the final judgment, the first subject of inquiry after his own personal state, will relate to his efforts for the salvation of those immediately around him. The solemn inquiry, "How came your wife or child, your servant or friend, your neighbour or fellow-citizen, to perish unwarned and uncared for by you?" cannot be met by a plea that he was occupied in achieving a distant good. He must not neglect the Christian welfare of his own household, then, and of his immediate connexions, no, not for the sublime occupation of evangelising a continent. And as with the individual Christian, so with a particular church. The district which lies immediately around it is to engage its attention first; the manner in which it discharged its obligations to that district will, we may suppose, in the day of final account, come under judicial investigation first; nor would the plea that it was engrossed in achieving some enterprise of mercy at a distance, however vast and magnificent, palliate its guilty neglect of those prior obligations.

But that which we wish here to impress is, that not only need not the class of home duties be neglected for those at a distance, but that they are to be discharged with the view of ultimately augmenting our resources for that distance, and as the most scriptural, effectual, and speedy method of benefiting the world at large. So far from thinking that more would have been done for home had less been done for abroad, we firmly believe that the reverse would have been the fact. So far from supposing that if any portion of Christian activity were withdrawn from foreign objects, it would proportionally increase our activity at

home, we should earnestly deprecate it as the first step towards arresting the entire machinery of home benevolence. So far from thinking that too much is done for distant objects, we urge the claims of home partly that we may be able to do more. Yes, the duty of a Christian church is, in this case, coincident with its most enlarged desires. For, by filling the sphere immediately around them first with Christian influence, its members are multiplying their agencies for occupying the next circle, and for thus gradually extending there sphere, and diffusing their influence, over the whole circumference.

Brethren, all our Christian societies are related—and he who should advocate one at the expense of another is, in truth, inflicting an injury on them all. While we urge the claims of the metropolis, then, we feel that we are seeking the good of the country at large; and, by promoting *that*, we confess we have an eye to the benefit of the world. While London is allowed by Providence to retain the prominent station which it does in the civil and political arrangements of the world, never can the Christian philanthropist contemplate its moral condition but with deep anxiety. Owing to its political connexions at home, its commercial relations abroad, and the vast extent of that empire, domestic and colonial, of which it is the capital, it commands a range of influence which no other city —not ancient Rome itself—has ever possessed. For evil or for good, it is always operating, not only to the utmost bounds of the civilized world, but beyond, through barbarous climes, to the very ends of the earth. If its prevailing character be that of ungodliness, to all the multitudes, myriads, millions of immortal beings within that vast circumference, it is an ever-streaming centre of moral contamination and eternal death. And is it for this that London is intrusted with the mighty talent of universal influence? Shall a city which might be the Gilead of the nations, dispensing the balm of life through all its thousand channels of communication, propagate instead a more

virulent form of that disease which it was meant to heal? Why then is not the health of the daughter of its people recovered? Why, when its recovery would instrumentally be the health of the world.

VI. Again. It cannot be replied, that, though convinced of the surpassing claims of the metropolis, and disposed to yield to them, *there are no Christians with whom to co-operate—no society with which to act.* Here is a society—the Christian Instruction Society, for which we plead—and which is only one of a family of kindred institutions, all devoted to the great objects before us—inviting, entreating your instant and ardent co-operation.

The class of persons to which this part of our appeal is applicable consists of those who, though enrolled among the followers of Christ, are not enrolled among the prayerful and active benefactors of the multitudes in their vicinity, perishing in guilt. And is it possible that any such should still be found in connexion with any London church which is associated with this Society? My friends, are you aware of the guilt of doing nothing? of the curse denounced against such as come not out to the help of the Lord —of the fact that the final curse is to be prefaced with the declaration, Inasmuch as ye did it not—and that, if that doom be yours, it will be aggravated in proportion to the facilities which such a society has afforded you for doing good? Can you be aware of the facilities for usefulness which it does afford?—that it has an important post of duty for every one disposed to engage in its service—or that, if obstacles absolutely prevent you from taking an active part in its proceedings, you can yet, by devoting a portion of your substance to its support, make all its agents your representatives—and may thus be at once a preacher in the tent, a missionary at the prayer-meeting, and a visiter at the house—and that by your earnest intercession in private, you can draw down the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the whole? Are you really aware of the extent of its operations, and the work it

is doing? that in the nine districts into which its wide field of labour is distributed, it numbers eighty-seven associations; employs nearly 2,000 visiters; supports fifteen missionary agents; maintains 124 prayer-meetings; and visits upwards of 50,000 families, consisting of about 250,000 individuals? that these agencies have, in other proportions, been at work for several years? that, during that period, whether occupied in an organised and regular visitation of the poor, in the circulation of religious publications, in imparting the knowledge of Christ by cottage lectures, by street and field preaching, or in defending the Christian faith, and enforcing its duties by publicly advertised discourses from the pulpit—its one aim has been to diffuse the saving health of the Gospel among the ignorant and the guilty? Are you, I ask, really aware of this? and, if so, is it possible that you feel no desire to become a vital and organic part of this great agency of Christian benevolence? Are you aware of the good which, by the Divine blessing, it has been the means of doing even during the last year? of the 3800 cases of distress it relieved—the nearly 3000 children it obtained for day and Sunday schools—to say nothing of the tracts and Bibles it distributed, and the 12,500 meetings which it held for the worship of God? and, more than all, of the conversions which it reports, and of which one of its associations states, "We have thirty candidates for communion, who have all been brought to serious reflection through the instrumentality of our visiters and missionary?" and can you hear of all this good resulting without coveting to share it by your own co-operation, and aspiring to augment it by your own endeavours? Are you aware that we are speaking of a work in which there is no neutrality? that if you belong to a Christian Church which is associated with this society, but are not co-operating with that church, you are in truth co-operating with the world against it—that if you are not warming the working members of that church by your zeal, you are chilling them by your apathy—that

there is no alternative between your being a useful wheel in this Christian machinery, or a drag on its movements? Are you aware that the tendency of your indifference is to defeat the very ultimate purpose of a Christian Church? to convert it into a monopoly of the balm of life, instead of making it the Dispensary of that blessing? to draw down on it the curses of the world as a monster of selfishness, instead of securing for it the thanks of mankind as the laborious instrument of their salvation? And can you think of going to the tribunal above, to render an account of your stewardship, without feelings of alarm? If even the most devoted and self-sacrificing servant of God cannot contemplate that event without acknowledging his unprofitableness and imploring forgiveness, how deep the consciousness of guilt with which you should be inspired! Pray, at least, that you may not be summoned there at a time when any of your active fellow-members may be there to confront you—that you may not meet together in contrast at the bar of God. Pray, at least, that you may not ascend thither at a moment when any of the multitude you are neglecting shall appear there also, lest the solemn question, "Why was not their spiritual health recovered?" should attract all eyes to you, as the shameful and guilty cause.

VII. But there is a second class to be addressed—those for whose benefit this Society exists—and of these I would contemplate especially that important though sceptical portion for whose information and conviction courses of Lectures on the Evidences of Christianity have from time to time been delivered by the ministers of this Society. I should not have singled out such from the rest on this occasion, were it not for certain well written but anonymous letters which I have received, professing to come from members of this class, and bearing internal evidence of such an origin —professing besides to represent the opinions of the great majority of this class concerning this society—

and leaving me to infer that some, if not many such, would be present this evening.

The friends of this Society will sufficiently understand the substance of these communications, when I remind them that one of the chief characteristics of the persons in question, is to regard the Christian ministry merely as a lucrative profession, and consequently to view every effort we make to propagate the Gospel, as arising from interested motives. While, therefore, they allow that certain parts of your proceedings are free from this suspicion to all appearance, they specify other parts which to their apprehensions justify their old conclusions, throw them back on their sceptical prejudices, and considerably diminish the amount of your usefulness. And, brethren, however unfounded and unjust such suspicions may be, the great lesson we have to learn from it—a lesson whose importance is daily and increasingly illustrated is this—that the great defence of the Gospel is the holy and unearthly benevolence of those who profess it—that when we have delivered a thousand lectures, and exhausted the last argument in its vindication, the most eloquent lecture, and the most convincing argument, yet remain to be added in our visible and disinterested devotedness to the welfare of those we address—and that the nearer we approach to that state of evident disinterestedness, the more unanswerable and complete will be our defence of the Gospel, and the more successful will our God render us in its diffusion.

But as to the persons in question: you, my friends, profess to be tired of the dreary wretchedness of scepticism—you are not disinclined, you say, to admit the truth and excellence of the Gospel, but the apparent selfishness of its professed advocates disheartens and deters you from cordially embracing it; that is to say, you allow that you are the subjects of a moral disease, and that the Gospel, for aught you know, is the only remedy; but though that remedy is brought to you without money and without price, and though the per-

sons who bring it assure that it is healing them, yet because you fancy that you discover in them faint indications that they are not yet perfectly restored, you cannot bring yourselves to accept the balm, but will rather continue to court destruction. Is this wise?—is it the part of rational beings?—will it sound satisfactory even in your own ears, think you, when God shall eventually ask the question, as assuredly he will, "Why was not your immortal health recovered?"

Now, that which we entreat you to do is—what we know you will then wish you had done—to examine the claims of the Gospel on their own independent ground. Concerned as we are for our own character, we trust that we are immeasurably more concerned for the character of the Christian faith; convinced as we are that we shall have to answer for our worldliness, whether it tends to confirm your scepticism or not, we are equally convinced that that worldliness, were it tenfold more than it is, would not exempt you from the guilt of willingly and wilfully rejecting the Gospel; that the Gospel is supported by evidence so distinct from the conduct of its professors, that none but a mind strongly predisposed to unbelief could ever be tempted to confound them together. We point you to Christ: *his* disinterestedness you must admit; by report, you know it; you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich. We lead you to his cross; you surely will allow that pure benevolence alone can account for that. "Though he was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Look on that blood—it streams from the very heart of love. Well, that is our balm of Gilead, and He the physician there. "By his stripes we are healed." Cross of Jesus! what hearts of stone

hast thou melted, what wounded spirits hast thou made whole, what selfishness hast thou dissolved and turned into compassion! Oh, if there be love in the universe, it is here—here, bleeding the balm of life for perishing souls. Now, it is here we would conduct you, my friends; and that which we ask you further to believe is, that this Society has sprung from the benevolence of the Cross, and that so far are we actuated by its benevolence, that if we only succeed in leading and leaving you there in the attitude of penitence and faith, we shall count our object gained, and our toil rewarded. If you ask for the proof of this, we think we might justly remind you that all its ministrations are to you gratuitous; that if it employs a few stipendiary agents, *that* is only a further illustration of its benevolence, for its own members support them; while its almost two thousand visiters seek only the reward to be found in their labours.

But the time may come, when you may receive from its ministers and members more convincing proofs of disinterestedness still. Send for them in the season of your final sickness, or, rather, without sending for them, they will be there in the chamber of death—there when all prospect of reaping worldly advantage from you will have vanished—there to wipe the dew of death from your brow—there to minister relief, if you need it, to your temporal wants—there to calm your anxiety for the bereaved widow and the fatherless children, by assuring you of their protection—there to walk with you, as far as they may, through the valley of the shadow of death, and to point you at every step to the Lamb of God, the Saviour of the world.

But wait not, we entreat you, for that final proof of our concern. Trifle not thus with the salvation of your soul. Could we convince you, that all the compassion we profess for you is real—and could we, then, augment it a thousand fold—it would all be as nothing, compared with the benevolence of Him to whom we point you for salvation. Is there nothing

in his character to attract—nothing in his cross to affect you—no blessing in his Gospel which you desire? Why, then, is not the health of your soul recovered? Why, when it is offered you freely, as the air you breathe—kindly, as the melting tones of mercy—patiently, as the long-suffering of God—urgently, as the greatness of your danger, standing, as you are, on the verge of the gulf—why, when a number of your fellow-men unite expressly to urge it on your acceptance—when they assure you of its healing efficacy on themselves—when the proofs of that efficacy are all around you—and, when numbers, surmounting all these obstacles of which you complain, believe in Christ and are saved, "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die?"

VIII. But, finally, to return to that class to whom our remarks have been chiefly directed—to the professed friends of the Christian instruction of this metropolis—*you will not plead that the Christian Churches, to which you belong, have yet done their utmost for the religious recovery of its inhabitants.* Pleas and excuses of this kind generally spring from those who do the least, and who would be better satisfied still with doing nothing at all. They who are the most conspicuous for Christian activity, are commonly the most impatient and self-abased that so little should be done, while so much remains undone. Every church has its few active and its many indolent members, or, at least, those who are kept from indolence, chiefly to avoid the shame and the remonstrances to which it would lead; and well do the few know, that if the many were as active as themselves, their collective usefulness might be greatly increased. And well does the most active church in this metropolis know, that it has within itself the means of covering a much larger space than it has ever yet occupied with the works of faith and the labours of love. And well does this Society know, that if all the Christian talents in this city, which are at present unemployed, and all the resources still unexplored, were but brought out

from the napkin in which they are shrouded, and from under the bushel where they are hid, and were placed at its disposal, soon might London be penetrated and pervaded in all its streets, and alleys, and obscurest recesses, with the light of the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ. We mean not to say, that, in the highest sense of the term, it would be universally *evangelised*. To say this, would be to lose sight, both of the depravity which the Gospel would have to encounter in those to whom you took it, and of its dependence for success on the accompanying influences of the Holy Spirit. But we do mean to say, and would aim to impress it on every Christian present, that nothing but the consecration of all their available resources is necessary, in order that, by the Divine blessing, the Christians of this city may speedily see its entire population in possession of the knowledge of the Gospel remedy. We do mean to say, that the Christians of a place are held responsible for putting all the inhabitants of that place in possession of the Gospel—that wherever they have devoted themselves to the object, they have succeeded—that to suppose in such a case they could have failed, is to make the responsibility which had rested on them, return and rest on him who had imposed it. We do affirm, then, that the consummation at which we aim, depends, not on the *amount* of your resources, but on the *entireness* with which you consecrate that amount, whether great or small, to the service; that were you, on the one hand, to devote a thousand fold more to it, you would not to be warranted to expect success, if still you kept back a portion unemployed—but that if, on the other, your funds, and agents, and resources, were to be ever so much reduced from what they now are, still, if they were all you could furnish, you would be warranted in expecting complete success—that if the multitude to be fed be five thousand, besides women and children, and the means of meeting their hunger consist only of five loaves and two small fishes, still, if the whole of that scanty provision be cheerfully placed in the hand of Christ, in that hand

it will be so greatly multiplied, that they shall all eat and be filled.

But if this representation be correct, the fact that a large proportion of the metropolis is still unpossessed of even the knowledge of the Gospel remedy, demonstrates that its Christian Churches have not yet *devoted* themselves to the work. And then comes back, with augmented force, the solemn question, "Why it should be so?" If the disease to be remedied were physical, every available agency would soon be put into motion to subdue it. Why, then, when the part afflicted is the undying spirit—why, when the remedy provided is the very blood of Christ—when you are intrusted with the means of imparting it, and intrusted with them expressly that you may impart it—why, when the neglect of imparting it will be followed by the misery of the souls around you without measure and without end—and when the result of imparting it would bring glory to your Saviour, and immortal happiness to the souls which would be saved—why are you not devotedly administering the remedy? The more zealous and active members of this Society are entitled to ask you, why, when the diseased are dying around you, and you see that we are in the way of checking the ravages of the evil, and are only waiting for your co-operation in order to succeed—why will you refuse that assistance, and thus, in reality, depress our ardour, and impede our activity? At least, give us to-night more liberally of your pecuniary substance, and we will do what we can, by God's help, to supply your lack of service. The members of other religious Societies, the Christians of other places, are entitled to ask, why, when the moral recovery of London would strengthen the hands of every other agency for doing good, and operate beneficially to the ends of the earth—why will you allow large masses of its population to remain unvisited and unhealed, a source of wide-spread contamination and moral death? And are not the believers of other times—the weeping prophet—"the men who sighed and cried for all the

abominations" of Jerusalem—the agonised apostle—are they not entitled to ask, why scenes of guilt similar to those which convulsed their hearts with grief, should leave you comparatively unmoved? Rather, is not he, the Lord of them all—he, who, when he drew near to Jerusalem, and beheld the city, wept over it—is not he supremely entitled to ask, and may he not be regarded as now inquiring, "Why, with my name upon your lips, with my example before your eyes, my cross in your hands, and my command to carry it to every house, to every creature, sounding in your ears—why are thousands around you perishing in ignorance of my salvation?"

And why is it thus? and how long shall it remain? Till you not merely listen to an occasional appeal on the subject, but take the moral statistics of this mighty city into your stated and devout consideration—till you vividly picture its spiritual condition to the eye of your mind, or go forth, and look into it, and gaze upon it, with your bodily eyes. Would the Almighty affect his prophet with the spiritual death of the Jewish nation? he called him to *look* on a valley full of dry bones. Was the spirit of Paul at Athens stirred within him? it was when he *saw* the city wholly given to idolatry. Did Jesus weep over Jerusalem? it was when he drew near, and *beheld* the city. And if you would be duly impressed with the spiritual destitution of your Jerusalem—look at it—dwell on it—and soon will your eye affect your heart. Have you been moved of late by graphic accounts of heathen wretchedness? and have you felt that, did no physical and political obstacles intervene, you could go through the heathen world proclaiming the Gospel of Christ? The world of London guilt stretches immediately around you, with no such obstacles to prevent your instant and entire consecration to the work of applying the Gospel remedy. No Atlantic nor Pacific rolls between you and the objects of our present solicitude—they are in your streets, and at your doors. No Chinese exclusiveness is here—London "is open" to all you can do for

it—open in all its streets, and in every dwelling. No savage tribe here threatens you with immolation to its idol gods. Your only danger here lies in neglect—the danger of incurring Divine displeasure, and the upbraidings of the souls you neglect. Every consideration then urges you to activity; and the word of him that cannot lie promises to crown that activity with success. Only let your Christian endeavours correspond with your resources, and your prayers call down the Spirit of God upon the whole—and, "I will restore health unto thee, and I will heal thy wounds, saith the Lord." Your very "walls shall be salvation, and your gates praise." And the name of the city from that day shall be, (Jehovah Shamma,) The Lord is there."

CHRISTIAN PATRIOTISM;

A SERMON

DELIVERED BEFORE THE HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY,* AT THE POULTRY CHAPEL, LONDON, MAY 16, 1842.

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart, for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. ROM. ix. 1—3. x. 1.

WHEN the apostle gave expression to these sentiments, he had long and painfully learned how difficult it is to differ in opinion from those among whom we live, or to aim at their improvement, without incurring their aversion—it may be their active and unceasing hatred. If we, of the present day, have not learnt this lesson, it cannot be for want of illustration and even experience. But the evils of this nature to which *we* may be exposed, are mere inconveniences compared with those which the apostle had to endure. Picture his posi-

* The Home Missionary Society, composed of Congregational Dissenters, was formed in London, in 1819; its great object is the evangelization of the unenlightened towns and villages of Great Britain, in the accomplishment of which it has been eminently successful. It is a voluntary institution, and Christian liberality has contributed to its funds about £140,000, or nearly 700,000 dollars. The general results of the Society's labours may be thus presented:—

tion. With all his knowledge of the black and boiling rage with which the Jews regarded the triumphs of the cross—for he himself had been exceedingly mad against it—he had not merely to meet them incidentally in society as a Christian man—but to go and address himself to them as a *Christian apostle.* Well as he knew their bigoted *nationality*, he had yet to address them as the apostle of Christ *to the Gentiles.* Deeply as he could sympathize with their pharisaic pride as the children of the Theocracy, he had to announce the mortifying truth, that their obedience to the law, confidently as they relied on it—and their peculiar privileges, much as they gloried in them, would avail them nothing as means of salvation—

1. It has introduced the Gospel into some hundreds of parishes, where it was previously unknown.

2. It has been instrumental in the conversion of thousands of individuals—hundreds of whom have died in the faith of Christ.

3. It has collected bodies of Christian converts together in many places where there had been none before. Churches of professed believers have thus been formed, who are now actively engaged in works of Christian benevolence, in teaching the young, in circulating the Scriptures and religious tracts—and in every possible way trying to increase human happiness, by spreading around them the influence of pure and undefiled religion.

4. The Society has been instrumental in obtaining the erection of many places of religious worship, and though it claims no property in any such buildings, it takes care that they shall be secured for the use of the people, in connection with the preaching of evangelical doctrines, and no others.

5. It has collected many thousands of persons, the greater portion of whom had formerly never attended the public worship of God. These hearers are to be found scattered over more than thirty counties of England, and in the midst of a population of more than half a million of human beings, to whom the preaching of the Missionaries is accessible.

6. The Society has been the means of collecting thousands of children in Sunday-schools; many of those so instructed in the earlier years of its existence, are now members of Christian churches, village preachers, and the most efficient teachers of the present generation of the young, in the Sunday-schools of the Society. School-rooms have been erected, week-day schools have also been formed, Sunday-school libraries established, and a desire for knowledge has been spread among the parents and the children, on the various stations. Ed.

absolutely nothing. And well as he knew that their pride and prejudices had gone on increasing in proportion as their glory had departed—till now they had reached a state of the most morbid sensitiveness respecting their national importance and religious security—he had to discharge the painful duty of announcing, not merely, like an ancient prophet, that their economy was in danger—that it would be repealed at some future time, but that, by a judicial act of God, they were now to look on themselves as already and actually cast off, and the Gentiles called in their stead.

This was truly the burden of the Lord—all the burdens of the Lord collected into one. To have had to deliver it, would have been gratifying to a harsh and malignant spirit—especially if smarting from the insults he had received from his countrymen. As he poured out vial after vial with slow and steady hand, he would have called his fiendish deliberation, fidelity to God; and have mistaken his own feast of malevolence, for zeal for the Lord of hosts. To a timid spirit, anxious only not to offend, the burden would have been intolerable. *He* would have clothed his message in soft and silken terms—and have mistaken his shrinking delicacy for Christian conciliation. But, mark, how admirably the apostle reconciles unsparing fidelity to the Gospel, with ardent affection for his countrymen. In professing for them that affection, he knew that he was about to avow what they would deem utterly incredible. But, said he, "I say the truth in Christ; I lie not; my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For *I could* wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." The phrase "*I could wish it*," implies the presence of a condition which he knew to be impossible; and that therefore he *ought* not, *did* not, wish it; that the wish would not have been availing, allowable, or proper. "But such," said he, "is my love to my countrymen, that *were it proper and possible*, I would devote myself to

the destruction which threatens them, could they by such means escape."

Having thus avowed his deep concern for their welfare, he boldly advances to his painful duty. He shows, first, that God may consistently reject the Jews, and extend salvation to the Gentiles; second, that he had declared by his ancient prophets that such was his purpose; and third, that he had now actually carried his purpose into effect. And having thus far discharged the burden of the Lord, he again takes up the language of passionate protestation for their welfare—language in which he appears to breathe forth his inmost soul—"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." May God baptize *us* with the same spirit of holy solicitude for the salvation of all around us—while we endeavour to show—That enlightened patriotism is a Christian virtue—That the highest order of patriotism is that which leads us to seek the salvation of our countrymen—That the highest order of instrumentality we can employ for this purpose, includes willing self-denial and earnest prayer—And that, besides the great general motives which should induce us to seek their salvation in common with that of all other men, some of the special reasons which moved the apostle should equally operate upon us.

I. First, we have to show that enlightened patriotism is a Christian virtue. Some of you may not be unaware, that among the unfounded objections which infidelity, at one time, raised against the Gospel, one was—that it does not inculcate patriotism—the love of our country. Yes, such was its rage for objections against Christianity—against a system which inculcates whatsoever things are honest, lovely, and of good report—and such the dearth of objections, that it actually uttered the groundless complaint that the gospel is silent on the subject of patriotism. Now, had the objector been required to define what he meant by the term, he would have found himself answering his own objection. Would he refer, for example, to the patriot-

ism of the Jews? that, as we have seen, was bigotry —bigotry which consigned the whole human race, themselves excepted, to destruction. We hope it is no disgrace to the Gospel, that it does not inculcate bigotry. Would he refer to the patriotism of Greece? that was *pride*—pride which looked down on the people of every other land as on a horde of barbarians. Or to the patriotism of Rome? that was *martial ambition*—ambition which regarded all the world besides as made to be conquered and enslaved. We hope it is not deemed a disparagement to the Gospel, that it does not inculcate pride, nor military aggression. Or would he refer to the patriotism of modern nations? that has been marked by selfishness, unrelenting selfishness towards all who lived beyond certain territorial limits. "Is there any thing more ridiculous," asks the sagacious Pascal, "than that a man has a right to kill me because he lives across the water, and that his prince has a quarrel with mine, though I have none with him?" We hope it is no imputation on the Gospel, that it does not inculcate such a spirit. No; it says nothing that has the remotest tendency to build in a nation with a Chinese wall of selfishness. It confers not on one state a right to forge fetters for another. It kindles no brand to ignite those popular passions and national antipathies which are themselves liable to spontaneous combustion. It proposes to sanctify and subordinate patriotism to the nobler purposes of philanthropy—the love of country to the love of man. Assuming the principle that every true interest is universal, it refuses to entertain any project as *final*, less than the amelioration of the species. In prosecuting its march, therefore, it consults the map of the world. And already its harmonizing effects are widely felt. As the sun of righteousness ascends in the firmament, and our moral horizon enlarges, those whom we had seen only by the torch-light of prejudice, disfigured as phantoms whom it was thought merit to hate, are discovered to be men whom it is a pleasure to love. Nor is the healing process to terminate, till all kindreds,

people, and tongues, are drawn into the close relationship of a family compact, preparatory to the final assembly of the church in heaven.

But every country sustains a twofold relation—an external, and an internal. In its external aspect, or relation to other lands, we have seen that the Gospel would convert every people it visits into agents of good to "every creature." And while thus aiming at universal benevolence, it does not overleap any of the inner and smaller circles of civil life. Beginning with the individual, it requires him to do unto others as he would they should do unto him. Entering the domestic circle, it hallows the marriage union, inculcates filial obedience, enjoins on servants honesty and fidelity, and considerate kindness on masters. Passing through the various classes of society, it requires them to be diligent in business; given to hospitality; ready to forgive; to give to him that needeth; and, as they have opportunity, to do good unto all. It gives the magistrate a sword with which he is to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well; enjoins the subject to render unto all their due; and, entering the house of prayer, it authoritatively exhorts "that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty." Indeed, the Gospel prescribes every general rule, and tends to form every principle of virtue—on which the welfare of a people can depend; and it would be easy to show that no evil could possibly befal a state, either in its internal or external relations, which does not arise from the neglect of these virtues, or the violation of these laws.

But on this subject, the Gospel is as rich in example as in precept. In the conduct of our blessed Lord, we behold a holy patriotism personified—the love of country emdodied. "I am not sent," said he, "but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" intimating how gladly he would have become the Shepherd of Israel. Where did patriotism ever exhibit a nobler

burst of sorrow than when, on Mount Olivet, he beheld the city, and wept over it, and said, "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thee, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!" Whose patriotism ever endured what his did—toils, reproaches, unceasing persecution, ignominious death—yet saved his latest breath to say, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." He had but few offices to bestow—but they were the highest out of heaven—and these he bestowed on twelve of his countrymen according to the flesh. He had but one gift to impart—but oh, it comprehends every other—the gift of eternal life; and this he directed to be offered to his country *first*—"beginning at Jerusalem."

Christianity unfriendly to patriotism! Let the language of Paul confute the slander. Though his countrymen were his bitterest foes—though he had received at their hands "stripes and imprisonments, and deaths oft," yet with a yearning for their welfare, which nothing could appease, he exclaimed, "I could wish myself, were it available or right, made an anathema for their sakes." And his conduct strictly accorded with his professions. Follow him from city to city, and you will find that his first resort is to the synagogue. His first object of solicitude in every place is the salvation of his brethren according to the flesh. The language of his life was, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." And, still, the Christians of a country are its best patriots. If a foul blot is to be wiped from a nation's brow, like that of slavery—their hand is the first to remove it. If they unite to send forth their agents into distant lands—it is to civilize the aborigines of their colonies, and to lift their foreign dependencies in the scale of morality. If they impart instruction to the rising race at home—it is that kind of knowledge calculated to render its recipients the most useful members of the community. If they assemble together—they meet not in scenes of dissipation, to corrupt the

morals of society—but, as we now meet, to elevate its character, and to promote its highest welfare. In short, if there be any efficacy in prayer—any value in the blessing of God—then is the Christian the true benefactor of his land; for on him it devolves to offer that prayer, and to draw down that blessing.

II. This brings us to our second particular—that the highest order of patriotism is that which leads us to seek the salvation of our countrymen. We are far from saying that every thing short of this is worthless. We have studiously employed language to imply the contrary. When it is remembered that the great majority of a people aim at nothing higher than their own personal and present comfort; that they are content to leave the world as they found it—as ignorant, as helpless, and as miserable—and even worse than they found it, provided they may be left to their animal enjoyments—when this is remembered, it must be allowed that the man who rises above this selfishness; who steps out from the herd of mankind, and endeavours to do them good—however low and limited his object may be—that man deserves well of his fellows. He who aims only to alleviate the toils of human labour, and to multiply the passing comforts of human life, does well. He who laboriously studies the structure of the human frame, and who does it in order to expel its diseases and prolong its life—is acting wisely and well. He who lays himself out in any way for the good of society—who endeavours to simplify its laws, to enlarge its commerce, to multiply and regulate its charities, and to protect its liberties—who hears the groans of the oppressed, only that he may endeavour to allay them, and the chains of the captive, only that he may labour to break them—his aim is higher still. Let him have the gratitude of his country while he lives; and, when he dies, let his memory be monumentally preserved. But high and honourable as these objects are, compared with the aim of him who seeks the salvation of those around him, they sink into low insignificance. For what after all is their end? to alleviate the symptoms of a disease,

the seat of which they are unable to reach. But he, without disregarding the symptoms, aims at the extinction of the entire disease, and at the implantation of a new, an immortal life.

Now, we are prepared to show that nothing but Christianity has ever done this for a people—*can* ever effect it. We are aware, indeed, that, in the present day, religion has many competitors for the honour of improving mankind; that civilization and law, political economy and secular instruction, forgetting their total failure as a remedy for man, during the thousands of years in which they had the world to themselves, have generally come to believe that could they now but be left to work alone, they should need no higher aid to renovate society, and to make the world happy. But sift their pretensions. Call for witnesses. Ask *science* what it has done for a people when unguided by revelation, and you will find that it has invariably led through scepticism and sensuality to destruction—that however simple the character of a people may be, while struggling to establish their political existence, in no instance whatever has a progress in arts, and science, and attendant wealth, unaccompanied by religion, failed to increase the luxury and licentiousness, the arrogance and selfishness of a people, and thus to seal their doom. Examine the influence of mere *philosophy* upon a nation; and one of its ablest historians informs us that, in Greece, its diffusion was attended with a certain refinement of manners, and the deterioration of all moral and religious habits. Investigate the merit of mere *civilization;* and its ablest living expounder tells us that as societies are born, and live, and die, upon the earth, they contain not the whole man—cannot touch the nobler part of his nature—that he has a higher destiny than that of states; so that if the soul be diseased, civilization can only restrain the eruption when it endangers the social health. Investigate the claims of *law;* its acknowledged function is, not to remedy the evils of human depravity, but just to keep them within certain limits. The perpetual enactment of new laws, is a tacit con-

fession of the insufficiency of nearly all the legislation of the past. By some of our judges was it more emphatically than ever reiterated during their recent circuits, that, for the prevention of crime, law must be entirely beholden to the influence of a sound religious education. Examine the effect of political *government*, in building up the moral character of a nation; alas, there is not one which does not legalize some vices, and which is not content to swell its revenues by trafficing in others. Who has not heard of Plato's ideal republic; of Harrington's Oceana; of Bacon's New Atlantis; and of More's Utopia—all utopian schemes of government—and all of them, down to the debasing and impracticable scheme of the modern socialist—all of them implying that the form of government essential to the moral welfare of society is yet to arise. And the reason of the inefficiency of all these human instruments is obvious. Man has a physical, intellectual, and moral constitution; and they all of them invite defeat, by thwarting and running counter to some of the laws of that constitution. Besides which, and principally, that constitution itself has been deranged and subverted by sin; and none of these instruments have the power of harmonizing and restoring it.

If there be, then, a system calculated to remedy the evil, that must be the highest order of patriotism which employs it. Now such a system is the Gospel. And a moment's consideration will disclose the reasons of its efficiency. We just now remarked that, in forming a good society, the Gospel begins with the individual man. We have now to remark that, in forming the man, it begins with his heart. There the plague-spot first appeared—there the disease of sin is seated, and there the Spirit of God applies the remedy. It passes through the understanding, indeed, in a path of light; but its message is to the heart. It speaks to the imagination; but to the conscience it thunders. It carries the judgment along with it; but the heart is the place where it works. It discloses to man the astounding fact, that the reason of all his guilt and misery is, that

he has lost God out of his heart—that a host of evils have rushed in and taken possession—and that never till these are disowned and hated, and God is welcomed back again, can he hope to be truly virtuous, or safe, or happy. Is he aroused to a sense of his alarming condition? does he utter a loud cry for mercy? The Gospel points to the sacrifice of Christ, and proclaims, "atonement is made; for the sake of that sacrifice, God is prepared to blot out all your guilt." Does he complain of depraved affections, and unsatisfied desires? it offers him a new heart; puts him under the influence of the great renewing Spirit; tells him that his renovation has commenced already; and presents his affections with objects which purify and ennoble just in proportion as he loves and values them. Does he dread lest the world should return and tyrannize over him again? The Gospel throws open to his view another world—brings life and immortality to light—brings them as from an unknown distance, and places them before him—brings heaven with all its glories into his horizon—surrounds him with the solemn pomp and spiritual inhabitants of the unseen world—so surrounds him, that they look down upon him, press in upon him, that, do what he will, he feels that he is moving under the powers of the world to come. And in this way, having enlisted the moral nature of the man on the side of holiness, it works like leaven, from the centre outwards, till the whole man be leavened. Armed with the influence of the Holy Spirit, the Gospel goes down to the depths of his nature, making him a new creature in Christ Jesus—wise in a science which the wisdom of this world never knew—the subject of a government destined to absorb every other, and "which is righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost."

And, beyond this, the Gospel having thus rescued his moral nature, places it in harmonious relation, not only with every part of his own nature, but places *him*—the whole man—in harmonious relation with every object, and every law, physical, social, and moral,

which God has appointed or approves. The Gospel of the grace of God, which hath appeared to him, "teacheth him, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, he is to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the present world." And he now obeys, "not only for wrath, but for conscience sake." Besides which, a sphere of Christian usefulness to others, opens around him. Desires which he never knew, and motives which he never felt before, constrain him "to live, not unto himself, but to him that died for him, and rose again." Henceforth, he is a blessing to the community of which he is a member. And his heart's desire, and prayer to God is, that all around him may be saved.

Now Christianity, in thus beginning with the heart of man, and in restoring him to God first, differs essentially from all those human instruments of improvement on which the world relies, and which we just now named. It proceeds on the principle that as all the ills of life originated in man's guilty separation from God, so the first step towards the removal of these is to restore his happy relationship to God. It by no means rejects these human instruments—civilization, laws, government, philosophy—it accepts them all, employs them all. Where they are not, the Gospel introduces them; where they are, it directs and devolopes them. But as they are utterly inefficacious for man's moral disease, the Gospel holds them in entire subordination to the great remedy. And, in this respect, the Gospel is simply consistent—and is the only system which is consistent. Boast of philosophy!—the Gospel is the only true philosophy, for it does not expect to gain its ends without the employment of adequate means. Talk of fanaticism!—Christianity is the only remedial system which is *not* chargeable with that; for it is the only system which does not expect to make the fruit good, without first making the tree good. It does not calculate on the peaceableness of the man, who is still at war with himself; nor on the civil obedience of him, whose

breast is a scene of anarchy; nor on the agency of him as a friend of real freedom, who is still led captive by Satan at his will. It leaves it to the wise men of this world, to attempt to gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles.

Christianity, then, becomes profitable for the life that now is, by aiming supremely at the life which is to come. It attains the lower good, while accomplishing the higher. It makes a man provident for time, by making him provident for eternity. It renders him obedient to the law of the land, by making him first a law unto himself. It induces him to relax his grasp on the pelf of this world, by placing within his reach the durable riches of another. What numbers have admired the peaceful and hallowed scene pourtrayed in the Cotter's Saturday Night. And many a Christian patriot may have sighed and wished that such were the domestic economy of every family. And many a righteous legislator, at his wit's end for new expedients of government, may have reflected how easy and grateful a task it would be to govern a nation composed of such families. And so it would be. For what need of the laws to enforce the observance of the Sabbath, where the heart of the people was longing through the week for the return of the day of rest? How much would the question of making provision for the poor be simplified, where poverty was industrious, and sought no more aid than was absolutely necessary; and where benevolence extended that aid with a wise and a willing hand! How little need of capacious prisons, where every home was a school of moral discipline; or of an armed police, where every district was guarded by a standing army of Christian virtues! Oh, that men were wise, that they understood this! "For this"—we might say to them, as Moses did to Israel—"this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people!"

And is it so, that Christianity would thus renovate

the social life of a people, while aiming at their spiritual and eternal good? How evident is it, then, that that is the highest order of patriotism which seeks their salvation! Brethren, let others aim only at their inferior good, aim you at the highest, "and all these inferior things shall be added to them." Let others think only of leading them into the paths of science, fame, and power; do you aspire to lead them into the path of life—the path which knows no end till it has conducted them to a throne in the kingdom of God. And remember, that in thus blessing them spiritually, you are blessing them temporally also. And in benefiting them individually, you are benefiting the nation generally—you are thinning the ranks of ignorance, worthlessness, and vice; and you are multiplying the elements of national order and greatness. Let others fancy that they have attained an important end for a district in securing a transient visit from the great and the mighty—let it be ours to go through the land proclaiming, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven, and the king of heaven himself, are at hand." Oh, how much does a nation think of its foreign alliances—what sacrifices will it not make to preserve them—and what applause will it not shower on the statesman who succeeds honourably in drawing closer the bonds which unite it to neighbouring states. But is not he the real statesman who unites his country to heaven—who cultivates for it an alliance with the King of kings—who draws closer the golden links which bind it to his throne? Let this be our aim—to see our land in league with heaven—converted into a province of the Divine empire—made a kingdom of our God and of his Christ—inhabited by men who have become reconciled to God, and have sworn allegiance to the Prince of the kings of the earth. Brethren, let our heart's desire and prayer to God for them be, that they may be saved; and, then, when every other object shall have failed, and every political institution have ceased to exist, we shall discover that our end is gain-

ed; that, in saving their souls, we have secured a good, imperishable and eternal.

III. And this brings us to the third proposition—suggested by the language of the apostle—that the highest order of instrumentality we can employ for this end includes *willing self-denial and earnest prayer.* We think there is reason to conclude—however humbling the view may be—that if a people could be found destitute of every form of religion, Christianity, owing to its purity and spirituality, would be, if they were left to themselves, the very last form which they would think of embracing. And, further, that if, by some cause operating upon them from without, the Gospel *were* to be introduced among them, and were even to awaken among them a desire for general improvement—we believe that, if left to themselves, they would try every thing—philosophy, education, changes of law, new forms of government, every human means of improvement—and having found them all fruitless, would begin to try them all over again, before they would have recourse to the transforming power of the Gospel. And further still, that having been led, by some external cause, to adopt the form of Christianity, we believe that they would value it as an instrument of civilization, of legislation, of morality, value it for any thing rather than as an instrument of salvation: that even if they came to regard it in this light, they would try to bring it to bear upon the people in the mass, by passing laws and enforcing general observances, rather than by addressing it to the individual man; and that even if they came to this, they would address themselves to every part of his nature—to his body, by putting it into the posture of devotion—to his judgment, filling it with truths to be merely understood—to his memory, storing it with truths to be repeated whether understood or not—and would be quite satisfied if, in these respects, they succeeded, without thinking that, if the soul be unsaved, the man is lost. And does not this humbling view suggest that the man who is himself spiritually saved,

is the only one who is likely to employ the Gospel appropriately for the salvation of others? Yes, but it also suggests the further idea, that even he, though he knows that salvation involves a personal change—a change of heart—and though he desire to see the change pass upon all around him—will employ every other allowable means for gaining the end, rather than those of willing self-denial and earnest prayer. And the reason is clear—because the employment of these argues a high degree of spirituality of mind, and the bulk of professing Christians are content with a low state of piety; a piety which would rather contribute money than pray; rather employ others, than act itself; rather combine self-indulgence and very slender religious success, than self-denial and the greatest amount of good they can think of.

And yet this instrumentality, though the last and least to which we resort, is, we repeat, the highest we can employ. It is in effect, the all of Christian instrumentality combined, sublimated, and employed to the utmost. Self-denial! It is simply Christian consistency. It is the Christian who has been bought with a price, not embezzling his Lord's property. It is the living sacrifice at the altar, presenting himself and all that he possesses to God. It is the faithful servant with his loins girt, and saying to his Master, "What wilt thou have me to do?" It is the sinner saved, looking at the cross, till his eyes fill with tears of gratitude, and his zeal kindles to a flame, and he feels that, whether he is commanded or not, he cannot live unto himself, and grieves that the consecration of his all should so inadequately express his sense of obligation. Earnest supplication! It is faith passing by all secondary means, and making its way straight to God—putting aside every human hand, and going at once to God—entering the presence of the Eternal, and making its appeal to his throne. By self-denial, the believer is devoting all his own resources to the cause of Christ; while, by prayer, he is confessing the impotence of the whole, taking hold of the strength of

God, identifying himself with Almighty power. Self-denial and earnest prayer combined, form an order of instrumentality to which the church is comparatively a stranger—the power of which it has not tried on any extensive scale—and yet it is the *only* order of instrumentality to which God has promised unlimited success, and on which he can consistently confer it.

Brethren, may not this be the one great lesson which the Head of the church is about practically to impress on his people? It is well for us that he does not delay his blessing until our instrumentality is as perfect as it might be—that from the moment we begin to seek the salvation of men, he begins to honour the attempt—and that in proportion as we grow in devotedness, he graciously augments our usefulness.

But the time arrives when, proceeding even at this rate, our opportunities of usefulness exceed our means of improving them—when our success begins to be burdensome. So much more in earnest for human salvation is God than we are, that his blessing on our most defective instrumentality so enlarges our field of operation, that the time at length arrives when we find ourselves shut up to earnest prayer and willing self-denial. That time, we think, is approaching in the history of most of our great religious societies—has actually come in the history of this society. His blessing on what you have done, renders it necessary that you should do more. His blessing on your past instrumentality, shuts you up to the necessity of more entire devotedness and of more earnest prayer.

IV. Then let us attend to some of the reasons which should induce this devotedness; and we shall find, fourthly, that, besides the great general motives for seeking the salvation of our countrymen in common with that of others, some of the special reasons which moved the Apostle, should equally operate upon us.

1. Now let me ask, in earnestly desiring the conversion of his countrymen, was he not yielding to the natural promptings of sanctified humanity! Our ob-

ligation to preach the Gospel to every creature is founded partly on our family relation to every creature; for God hath made "of one blood all the nations on the face of the earth." The closer our relationship, then, to any part of the human family, the more specific and urgent our obligation to seek their salvation. So far from violating or disregarding any of our natural ties, the Gospel draws them closer, makes them sacred, employs them for the highest purposes, renders it impossible for us to look on our friends and relations as perishing, without yearning to save them. My friends, the inhabitants of your own country are more nearly related to you than those of any other; only yield to the impulse of humanity, and to their salvation you will devote yourselves supremely.

2. And, in thus acting, your highest relative interests would be found to coincide with your duty. The Apostle had ties more tender even than those of country; and he knew that the welfare of those whom he most ardently loved was closely bound up with the spiritual condition of his nation generally; and would not that induce him to desire its conversion? Brethren, it accords with the government of God to deal with a nation collectively—to bless it or to punish it collectively in this world. The depraved condition of a people in one age of its existence, is visited with its evil consequences in a subsequent age. The spiritual state of Britain in the present age, is preparing spiritual consequences for the next age. As you now sow, those who come after you will reap. For it is not possible for one part of a people, any more than of the human body, to suffer, without all the parts suffering with it. By a regard, therefore, to the welfare of those who are the dearest to you—parts of yourselves—to the welfare of your children's children to the latest posterity, the obligation is laid on you to minister devotedly to the spiritual interests of your country. As you could not hear that a fatal contagion was invading the land, and sweeping off the population,

without feeling that your own family were endangered, look on the moral contagion which rages around you, as involving the entire community, and, therefore, those whom you feel for most, in special danger.

3. We have spoken of the holy patriotism of Christ —of the tears which he shed over Jerusalem—and of his command, that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, *beginning at Jerusalem.*" Yes, no sooner did he find himself in a capacity to bless, than he began with blessing the inhabitants of Jerusalem. While their eyes were yet gleaming with the fire of triumphant revenge, he commissioned his servants to hasten and open the charter of redemption within sight of Calvary. And could the apostle know this without corresponding effect? The *example* of his Lord alone would have sufficed; his *solemn command* left him no alternative. His heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel was, that they might be saved.

Brethren, I assume not for Britain the same specific relations to Christ which Israel sustained. But if there be value left in signs—if any meaning in providential events—then Britain has long been the Judea of the West. That we are not favoured for our own sakes alone, but also for other and ulterior designs, we must be blind not to perceive. But equally blind must we be, not to perceive that we are distinguished by God in a surpassing degree. Blessings, compared with which the sacred contents of the ark were insignificant, have long been collected, and almost deposited, with us. Privileges, of which the temple, the whole theocracy, were only emblems, have long been dispensed to us in rich profusion. "He hath not dealt so with any people." And can we know that he hath thus "set his love on us," without falling in with his gracious views, and sympathizing with a Society whose object it is to promote them? My friends, do you admire the devotedness—the heroic self-devotion of the apostle, in affirming that he *could* wish himself accursed from Christ for the sake of his people? "Ye know the grace of

our Lord Jesus Christ,"—he actually *became a curse* for us—he endured and exhausted every penal curse for man—took our place in the universe—opened his bosom—and welcomed to his heart the stroke which man had deserved. And now, we repeat, the Gospel of his salvation has long been given to Britain—not exclusively indeed, but *pre-eminently*, in our possession—with all the rich blessings which come in its train. Oh, if there be any meaning in providential arrangements, never can our prayers and efforts for Britain's salvation exceed the concern which he has manifested—*is still* manifesting—for its entire recovery to God.

4. And this reminds us of another motive. When the apostle had protested his readiness to suffer for his brethren, why think you did he finish the sentence by adding, "who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises?" Partly, doubtless, to show his profound regard for their peculiar privileges. But partly, also, to account for his anxiety for their salvation, by intimating, that in proportion to the value of these external privileges, was their responsibility and danger if they failed of the grace of God.

Look, brethren, at your fellow-countrymen in the same light. Think of their superior facilities and external means of salvation—their Sabbath and other schools for religious instruction—their places for the worship of God—the Bible completed, translated, and placed before them—the glorious Gospel of the blessed God statedly proclaimed by twice ten thousand tongues—privileges which might well awaken the idea that they are adopted in the stead of God's ancient people. But if such their advantages, who shall estimate their responsibility? If a heathen incurs responsibility by coming within even the distant sound of the Gospel—if the presence of a single missionary in a heathen district introduces a new element of responsibility into that district, where is the arithmetic which shall describe the vast responsibility of our countrymen? But then,

if such their advantages and responsibility, what is their moral condition? I will not refer you for a reply to the statistics of national crime—to crowded jails and penal colonies. I will not refer you to the dense population of our cities—where thousands live on the vices of others, and thousands more are training up as their successors. I will just refer you to that part of the population which is to be found in the field which this Society especially occupies—our rural districts. Would you see ignorance in its most besotted state?—you must repair to some of our remote villages. Would you see intemperance carried to beastly stupidity? and brutality wantoning in the infliction of animal suffering? and the moral and reasoning powers all but extinguished?—still you must repair to some of our rural districts. Would you see man's nature in its most unimpressable and unimprovable state—in a word, would you see heathenism in its essence—in every thing but its accidental forms?—then must you visit our retired districts. We are accustomed to speak of ancient Bethsaida and Chorazin as standards of human guilt. But, considering our pre-eminent advantages, and the prevailing neglect of them, every county in Britain has its Chorazin and Bethsaida—equally calling for a "woe unto thee!" We speak of Jerusalem as containing, at the death of Christ, a fearful concentration of guilt;—from our land it would not be difficult to collect together elements of depravity equal to those which Jerusalem contained, when the sight of it drew from the eyes of Jesus bitter tears. We are apt to think of the Jews as, at that time, exposed to a fearful doom, and therefore, as objects for peculiar compassion. But, when Paul was ready to lay down his life for them, say what element was there in the danger which they had incurred, to which the unconverted of our countrymen are not equally exposed? No, brethren, the great difference is, that he looked at *their* danger—thought of it at night—recalled it in the morning—carried the subject with him through the day—followed them in thought to the bar

of God—heard their fearful doom—saw them perishing—saw them *perish*—and, as he saw them sink, felt that he could have plunged after them, might he but pluck the firebrands from the flames! Yes, he felt this for *his* countrymen. Oh, for more of his self-sacrificing spirit in the behalf of ours!

5. Associated with this motive is another, which adds, if possible, to its force. When the apostle breathes out his heart's desire for Israel's salvation, hear the reason which he assigns—"For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge; for they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Now, this accurately describes the condition of numbers in our own country. Could you take a moral survey of the people, you would find, that besides the actively irreligious, of whom we have just spoken, there are a considerable number, especially of our rural population, who are ignorantly reposing for eternity on a ceremonial righteousness of their own—persons who look on anything *more* than the *form* of religion, as madness; on any thing less, as heathenism—a class, to whom salvation by the sacraments is a doctrine more familiar than salvation by the cross—and by whom Popery itself, if disguised by another name, would be cordially accepted and zealously defended. But in that class, I believe, many might be found who are what they are, ignorantly—who are far from satisfied with their state—who, at some period of life, have heard of another and a better way—and who ever and anon, like many an inquiring heathen, grow restless, and look around them for a guide to that better way—but look in vain.

Brethren, were we assured that but ten such persons existed in some remote heathen region, we should be justified in incurring unlimited expense and labour in endeavouring to reach their case. My conviction is, that there is not a portion of Britain, in the obscurer parts of which, especially, persons of this class are

not to be found in numbers, which, if summed up, would amount to thousands—yes, thousands, whose case can be reached only by an agency which will take the Gospel to their doors—into their very houses. And can we recollect that persons of this class are not in China, not in India, not at the ends of the earth, but close to us—our countrymen, without arousing ourselves to do more for their recovery to God? Go into any county you please, and draw around you an imaginary circle of ten or twenty miles in diameter—and, my conviction is, that, without any danger of error, you might say to yourself—"Within this imaginary circle, of which I am now the centre, there are souls ignorant of God's righteousness—souls perishing *literally through lack of knowledge*—destitute of the only knowledge which can lead to their salvation." And can you realise this picture to your own mind—can you think of those souls quitting that circle to appear at the bar of God, (I will not suppose that you are summoned there, at the same moment, to meet them—but even setting aside that solemn thought,) can you think of them as quitting that circle for the invisible world—leaving your very presence—departing from under your eyes—in an agony of apprehension about the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and yet ignorant of a better—casting back on you, from the shores of that untried world, upbraiding looks, because you cared not for their souls—can you think of this without resolving "My heart's desire, and prayer to God, and earnest endeavour, shall be, that they may be saved?"

6. And, finally, we might urge this *for home*, on the ground of the advantage which would accrue from it to all our *foreign missions*. When the apostle yearned for Israel's salvation, did he not often picture them to his mind, think you, occupied, like himself, as zealous missionaries of the cross? "For," said he, "if the *casting away* of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the *receiving* of them be but life from the dead?" And may *we* not ask, in a similar

strain—If Britain, though evangelized only in a very partial degree, is yet the centre of Christian activity to the world—what would it have been had that evangelization been *general*? What need of our missionary operations in some of the islands of the southern sea, had our *naval* population been missionaries of good, instead of evil? What need of much of our missionary apparatus in India—what need of our colonial missions—had our people gone forth, like the pilgrim-fathers of other days, to erect their altar, and worship God, wherever their lot should be cast? As it is, our foreign missions are now indispensable, if it be only to counteract the evil which our countrymen have everywhere diffused. What need of our Foreign Missionary Societies to be in danger of having to sound a retreat through want of resources, were our own country evangelized? Were our churches at home doubled, our resources would be doubled for foreign labour.

Think not, then, that the interests of religion at home and abroad are opposed to each other; that whatever is done to promote the one, is so much lost to the other. Think not that more would have been done for home, had less been done for abroad—the reverse would have been the fact. Imagine not that if a portion of our activity were now withdrawn from foreign objects, it would be so much added to our activity at home; most certainly would such a step tend to arrest the entire machinery of home benevolence. So far from thinking that too much is done for distant objects, we urge the claims of home, partly, that we may be able to do more. Yes, our duty to home, in this respect, coincides with our most enlarged desires for other lands. For, by occupying the sphere which is immediately around us, we are multiplying our agencies for occupying a circle beyond, and for thus extending our sphere wider and wider, till the whole field of usefulness be brought under cultivation.

Brethren, so related are our duties, that he who

neglects the least will find no excuse by pleading that he was attending to the greatest; and so connected are all our Christian societies, that he who promotes one at the expense of another, inflicts injury on them all. The example of our blessed Lord, in looking down from the cross, and tenderly providing for a mother's comfort, when he was in the very crisis of the world's redemption, shows that all the true interests of humanity are *indivisible;* and that all duty is *sacred and one.* You cannot, therefore, serve your Home Missions, without indirectly serving your Foreign Missions. You cannot benefit your country spiritually, without instrumentally benefiting the world. Such are the political and commercial relations of Britain, and so vast the extent of its empire, that, for evil or for good, it is always operating, not only to the utmost bounds of the civilized world, but beyond, through barbarous climes, to the very ends of the earth. Come, then, my friends, for the sake of *the world*, attend to the spiritual claims of home. We ask you not to withdraw your sympathies from foreign objects. But your fellow-countryman is lying at your door—perishing at your threshold—and all we ask is, that, in going out to relieve some distant object, you will not step over him, and leave him there till you return. Patriotism, philanthropy, Christianity—all unite in urging you to minister at once to his wants—if it be only for the sake of enabling him to join you in your more distant enterprize. Now the supporters of the Home Missionary Society are acting in harmony with this view. It has 147 agents—occupying 153 *principal* stations, and 490 *out*-stations—and who preach in about 650 towns, villages, and hamlets, in thirty four counties. Connected with these stations, are 188 Sunday-schools, containing 12,000 children, taught by 1475 gratuitous teachers. And, during the past year, 4000 copies of the Holy Scriptures have been distributed by the agents, and many thousands of religious tracts circulated. Would to God that these agencies could be doubled—if only

for the sake of our *foreign* activity—for, sooner or later, they could not fail to multiply our resources for occupying the field of the world.

But, independently of that effect, let me, once for all, recall your attention to the fact, *that enlightened patriotism is a Christian virtue*—that *the highest order* of patriotism is that which leads us to seek the salvation of our people—that the higher order of instrumentality we can employ for that end, includes self-denial and fervent prayer—and that the same reasons which induced the apostle to employ this agency for *his* people, exist to induce us to employ the same for our people. My friends, here is a test of your Christian benevolence. If you are indifferent to the claims of home, you are convicting yourself of insincerity in all you are doing for distant objects; for, if any man love not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he sincerely compassionate those whom he hath not seen? Now, here is your brother. Surely the suppliant who is now at your feet does not lose his claim on your pity, by being your *brother!* Surely his spiritual nakedness, poverty, and wants, are not the less affecting, because you *see* them. He lies wounded and bleeding in your path—surely you will not pass by on the other side, to pour your oil and wine into wounds which you never saw. "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?" The daughter of *our* people is diseased, and requires healing, not less than did the daughter of Judah. When, at length, her malady proved incurable, and she was vanquished by the iron hand of Rome—you know how the victor represented, on his commemorative medals, the virgin daughter of Sion—*sitting, in the dust, drooping and disconsolate, at the foot of her own palm-tree.* You know how Africa was, but lately, pictured; and the touching appeal which the sight continued to make, till the nation arose, and smote off his chains—*one of her sable sons kneeling, manacled, and, with imploring eye,* exclaiming, "Am I not a man, and a brother?" And does

Britain admit of no similar appeal to the eye? They represent her, indeed, seated in power, armed with a trident, and attended by her lion; and for her political condition, these symbols may do. But, for her *spiritual* state, for an emblem of the religious condition of millions of her population, these signs of power should be all removed, and she should be seen lying, prostrate, on the steps of a Christian temple, perishing through lack of knowledge. To meet the spiritual wants of this large and perishing class, the Society for which I now plead exists. Is it your heart's desire and prayer to God for them, that they may be saved? then, help this Society to extend its saving operations.—Amen.

IMPORTANCE OF AN EDUCATED MINISTRY:

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN GROSVENOR STREET CHAPEL, MANCHESTER, PREPARATORY TO THE OPENING OF THE LANCASHIRE INDEPENDENT COLLEGE,* APRIL 25, 1843.

FRIENDS and Supporters of the New Independent College, you have reached an important point in a most important undertaking. Had each of you been occupied in building a house for himself—a house in which it was likely that you and generations of your posterity would live and die—you could not contemplate taking possession on the morrow without musing thoughtfully on the probable consequences of the change. Had you been engaged in erecting a house for God, you could not have had its public dedication in prospect for the morrow, without feeling that solemn interests were involved in the event—interests arising out of all the past, and associated with all the future. But there is a sense in which the opening of a College for "men of God" designed for the Christian Ministry, is more important still; for if the Church is instrumentally to move the world, and the ministry is instrumentally to move the church, an Institution in which that ministry, or a portion of that ministry, is to be trained for service, must be regarded as imparting the primary impulse to the whole. Such an institution you have long contemplated; and, to-morrow, "having

* The Dissenting community of Great Britain have always been the advocates of a learned ministry, and have furnished their full proportion of eminent biblical scholars. The Lancashire College, however, in its

obtained help of God," you hope to receive the answer to many an earnest prayer, and to reap the first-fruits of many an hour of unknown anxiety and toil, in opening the noble erection in which such an institution is to exist. Numbers who have watched your movements with sympathetic interest are now mentally offering you their cordial congratulations, and are ardently breathing the desire, "God be merciful to them, and bless them, and cause his face to shine upon them."

In anticipation of to-morrow's engagements we have now assembled. And as a topic appropriate to the occasion—a topic of your own selection—you are to be addressed on "the importance of an educated Ministry." Not, indeed, that *you* can be supposed to entertain any misgivings respecting its importance. On the contrary, by the erection of your college, you have reared a monumental evidence of your deep sense of its vital importance; and your object will be gained by the present discourse, I presume, only in proportion as it serves to expound the grounds of your own convictions, and to enforce them on the attention of other minds. In pursuance of this design, I propose to explain the proposition that the Christian ministry, should be educated; to state some of the grounds of the importance of such education; and then to point out some of the obligations resulting from it.

I. First, we have to explain what we mean when

buildings, and its prospects stands unrivalled in England. The institution itself has long existed at Blackburn, but the large increase of Congregational Dissenters in the district, and other circumstances rendered its removal to the populous town of Manchester eminently desirable. The building, which is of the gothic order of about the fifteenth century, contains an entrance, tower, corridor, library, lecture rooms, dining room, residences for the professors, and fifty two comfortable dormitories for the students. The cost of the whole, with seven acres of land by which it is surrounded, was about £25,000 or nearly 125,000 dollars. The president is the learned and excellent Dr. Vaughan, assisted by the Rev. Dr. Davison, as professor of Biblical Criticism, the Rev. F. W. Newman, M. A., professor of the learned Languages, the Rev. H. Rogers, M. A., professor of English Literature, and others.—Ed.

we speak of an educated ministry: and, while doing this, we shall, if I mistake not, be incidentally furnishing a sufficient reply to the principal objections of those who not only deny its importance, but even deprecate it as an evil. For, you can hardly need to be informed, that in all ages of the church such persons have existed. As early as the second century of the Christian era, a party arose, who, confounding the use of learning with its abuse, denied its compatibility with the spirit of piety. In the third century the controversy raged with considerable violence; and although, owing to the efforts of the Alexandrian school, especially of Clement and Origen,* the cause of letters and philosophy gradually triumphed, its opponents have not wanted for reinforcements in any subsequent age. Fortunately, as most of their prejudices originate in ignorance, however well-meaning, they furnish unintentionally the most apposite proof of the value of that knowledge which they condemn; since an explanation of the subject seems all that is necessary to silence their complaints.

1. In offering such an explanation, we may remark, first, that, in advocating the education of the ministry, *we pre-suppose the existence of genuine piety in all who receive it.* For, we cannot forget that, while the private Christian is to be an example to the world, the Christian minister is to be "an ensample to the flock" —a model of models. His central station and official

* The allegorizing exegesis of these fathers, especially of Origen, was not owing to their learning. The writings of the Alexandrian Jews had, ages before, exhibited similar principles of interpretation. Prior to this, again, and partially accounting for it, was the prevalence of the Platonic philosophy in Egypt. But the origin of the allegorizing tendency is to be looked for in a source deeper still, and one which is quite irrespective of learning—in the subtlety, activity, and love of the mystical, which have ever characterised the oriental mind. Indeed, If a sound education has any attraction for the allegorical mode of interpretation, it is the attraction of repulsion. And hence it will be found that, among ourselves, the metaphorical fancies of a Gill and a Keach are most acceptable to the uneducated.

character invest him with influences which render his every movement an object of interest to superior beings, for it deeply implicates the everlasting welfare of all around him. How important that the whole of that influence should be eminently holy; and how can that be, but by issuing from a character eminently pious? On this account, we call for evidences of the personal piety of every one seeking admission to our collegiate institutions; we take the opinion of his pastor, and of others likely to form a correct judgment of his character, and we subject the whole to the test of a patient and anxious examination.

If, then, it be objected, that some parties have made learning a substitute for piety in the ministry, and that others have appeared to expect that piety would follow as the effect of learning, we need not retort, in the language of Jerome, that there are those who err as egregiously on the other side in "mistaking ignorance for sanctity;" we content ourselves with simply remarking that we have no sympathy with the classes described. But, perhaps, it will be alleged that though we may and do require piety in the Christian student, we endanger his humility and his sense of personal insufficiency. We reply, first, in the spirit of Dr. Johnson's answer to a similar objection, that education can minister to vanity only as long as it is regarded as a distinction; let education be universal, and the distinction arising from it will cease. Or, secondly, we might remind the objector that, if the possible abuse of a thing is to lead to its disuse, we shall be adopting a principle which has originated the most fatal errors. For example, the conjugal state has its dangers; on his own principle, therefore, he cannot complain of that church which requires the celibacy of its clergy. Every sense of the body may prove an inlet to evil; shall it therefore be mutilated? or shall piety retire from social life to the monastery, the hermitage, or the desert? One of these alternatives, common consistency requires him to adopt. Or, thirdly, we might reply, that whatever the dangers of knowledge

may be, we have yet to learn the peculiar virtues of ignorance. We never found it to be a certain security against pride. We have known it to be more vain of some scrap of information on which it had accidentally stumbled, than we ever knew learning to be of all its stores. And, when raised to a station of influence, we have ever found the uneducated man to be in much greater danger of pride, than the educated. And, then, we may add, in proof of the perfect compatibility of learning and piety, that the most distinguished member of the Jewish Church, though "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," was the meekest of men; and that the most distinguished member of the Christian Church, though "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel," was the chief of the apostles, and a pattern of humility.

2. Again; that education of the rising ministry whose importance we advocate, *has mental development and discipline for its object*, as well as the attainment of actual knowledge. These objects are distinct. Indeed, it is possible so to communicate knowledge as to enfeeble and pervert the mind which receives it. In other words, it is possible to be learned without being educated. Instances of this truth are to be found in the "endless genealogies," the "strifes about words," and the "vain janglings," against which the Apostle cautions Timothy—in the scholastic sophistry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries—and, if I do not greatly err, in the writings of the Tractarians and Traditionists of the present day. And to these instances may be added, strange as it may seem, the preaching of many of those who object to an educated ministry; and whose discourses abound in verbal quibbles, laborious trifling, ingenious mistakes, and attempts at second-hand learning in a small way. All these may be regarded as exemplifying what may be called the learning of the uneducated—the learning which narrows the mind instead of enlarging it; which leaves it ignorant of great principles, and unable to find them.

Now if this be the evil of which the objector to an

educated ministry complains, he should be informed that he has mis-named it; and that the education we contemplate would prove its powerful and certain corrective. Our object is,—not to furnish the student in divinity with the high scholastic attainments; this the brevity of his term of study forbids;—not to store his memory with facts and general information; mere scraps and driblets of miscellaneous knowledge are all that the most diligent collector of facts could take away with him;—but to furnish him with that mental training which is necessary to the intelligent and useful discharge of the gospel ministry. Knowledge, indeed, he will be acquiring during the entire process—knowledge of the most useful kind;—but that which is more important still, is, that he will obtain the power of using it, and of augmenting it indefinitely. His capital in actual knowledge may be comparatively small; but give him the right mental habits, and "his pound will soon gain ten pounds" in addition. Show him the importance of great principles, and give him the power of dealing with them; and you have done more for him than as if you had deposited an encyclopædia of knowledge in his memory. For he who knows the principle of a truth, has in effect mastered all the facts and phenomena belonging to it. He who knows the principle of a truth, like the angel in the midst of the sun, stands in its centre and sees to its circumference.

3. Further: that education of the ministry which we advocate *is meant to correspond with the state of education generally*. If there are some classes of the community, for example, still comparatively unacquainted with even the rudiments of knowledge, we would not insist that their ministers should receive the highest educational advantages. And as such classes do exist, we rejoice in the existence of some theological institutions in which men of God are qualified, by a comparatively elementary course of training, for the spheres they are likely to occupy. But for the very same reason that we would observe this correspondence in their case, we would insist on a similar proportion

between the education of the ministry, and that of the public generally.

All education is comparative. So true is this, that the light possessed by one age is regarded as twilight, as darkness, by a subsequent age. Now the objector to an educated ministry should know, that if his chosen teacher can barely read and write, even that would have been formerly regarded as a very rare and learned accomplishment. We are, therefore, justified in saying to him, You surely do not deem the power of reading, and writing, and speaking with propriety, a superfluous attainment. You would not think of going in search of a man who knew nothing of this attainment, and of adopting him as your teacher on account of his superior ignorance. But, if you would not, you should remember that there was a time when the simple qualification of reading, writing, and speaking correctly, was considered to be open to all the objections which you now bring against the education of the ministry; for that was the education of the time. And as you now smile at the idea that any one could have ever objected to the simple education of that time, so, rely on it, the time will come when your objections to the education of the present day will be viewed in the same light. You should be reminded also, that if you do not object to the power of reading, writing, and accurate speaking, as a ministerial qualification, you are admitting the whole of the principle for which we contend. You are allowing that instruction to some extent is necessary. You are conceding that there ought to be some correspondence between the state of education generally, and the instruction of the ministry. The only question at issue between us is, not one of principle, but of degree—namely, the extent to which education is to be afforded. And this, we repeat, should depend partly on the state of knowledge in the general community.

4. The ministerial education which we advocate is *that which yields to Scriptural theology the chief place; and which treats every other branch of study*

as auxiliary to it. Now the most uneducated minister of the present day has unconsciously adopted the same principle; for he is largely indebted to the learned labours of his predecessors. However slender his mental resources may be, he obtains them only by availing himself of the toils of others. If he can but just read his Bible, and some favourite religious author, he is indolently enjoying the results of prodigious labour and abundant learning. Let him think what has been necessary in order to put that translation of the Bible into his hands—what watching, and weariness, and travail—what studying of languages, recension of copies, and collation of manuscripts—what division of labour, and years of persevering application! Surely it is not for one who is thus living on the learning and labour of others, to decry education; for the drone to depreciate the process by which the truth, sweeter than honey or the honey-comb, has been hived and made ready for his use!

If, however, he still urges that the Bible intimates that a knowledge of Scripture alone is sufficient to furnish the man of God for his office; we cheerfully admit the same. But then comes the question, what is to be the amount of that Scriptural knowledge;—shall it be the minimum or the maximum? We are anxious to put all the honour on the Bible we can—to extract from it, if possible, all that it contains—to make the most of it as God's instrument for the salvation of the world. "Our great divines," says Coleridge, "were not ashamed of the learned discipline to which they had submitted their minds under Aristotle and Tully, but brought the purified products as sacrificial gifts to Christ; they baptized the logic and manly rhetoric of ancient Greece; they made incursions into every province of learning, and returned laden with the choicest plunder; the scheme of the philosopher, the narrative of the historian, the vision of the poet, were all rendered subservient to the one predominant object of their researches; the gold of idolatrous shrines was transmuted into a purer ore by

their spiritual alchymy." And the education we advocate for the man of God is such, and such only, as shall be made subservient to his office as an expositor of the Bible; subservient, either by strengthening and preparing his mind as the instrument to be employed on it; or by furnishing him with the means of developing, illustrating, and communicating its truths.

5. Another explanatory remark we would offer is, that the education we advocate *is meant to be held in entire subordination to the agency of the Holy Spirit.* We believe that his agency is present in the intelligent and faithful ministry of the Gospel;—and that it is essential to the success of that ministry; and therefore would we have the education of the man of God of a tendency to harmonize his mind with that divine agency, and to subordinate to it, not his knowledge merely, but all the powers of his renewed nature. So that if an opponent to an educated ministry object, that Paul renounced all dependence on learning and eloquence; we reply, that we would do so likewise. Like him, we would have both, and, like him, would use both, but, like him, would depend on neither. We would not depend even on alms-giving, nor on prayer itself; and yet we would cultivate both as a duty and a privilege. If he allege, however, and perhaps this is his great objection—if he allege that because the efficiency of the ministry depends ultimately on the influence of the Spirit, therefore education for the ministry is unnecessary; we reply, that his objection rests on an entirely false assumption. It strangely supposes that because God *can* do a thing in a certain manner, therefore, he *will* so accomplish it. Entirely losing sight of those wise arrangements in nature, providence, and grace, by which means and ends are linked together, it makes the *power* of God the only rule of his conduct. Most cheerfully do we admit that, before the great constitution of nature and grace was actually set up, it rested entirely with the sovereign will of God whether human instrumentality should be employed or not in anything. But the question with which we have now to do, is not what *might* have been, but what *is*—not

one of *possibility* but of *fact.* From the moment of man's creation it became evident that the constitution which the Infinite Mind had seen fit actually to adopt, was one which required man's instrumentality. The constitution of grace adopted the laws of nature, and employs them. And man's wisdom consists in placing himself in harmony with these laws; for God has been pleased to bring himself under the gracious obligation of a promise to connect his blessing with obedience to these laws.

Now your error, we might say to the objector, your error consists in supposing that because there was a period when God could, hypothetically speaking, have adopted a constitution of things which should have dispensed with human instrumentality, therefore you are at liberty to act as if he had really adopted such a plan; and in supposing that because he still retains all his original power, and may choose occasionally to employ it out of the ordinary and appointed way, therefore you are at liberty to take his sovereign exceptions as your only rule of calculation and conduct. How inconsiderate, not to say daring, your conduct! He *could* teach his servants the knowledge of the alphabet; but you would not have had your minister wait, until that knowledge was supernaturally imparted to him. He *can* make the naked rock, or the sea-shore sand, spontaneously yield corn; but, we presume, you look for it rather in the adjoining field, nor do you expect to find it even there without cultivation. He *can* make the knowledge of a single evangelical truth the means of salvation; he has even often done it; but you would not on that account limit your knowledge of the Bible to a single text. You do not make what He *can* do, the rule of what he *will* do, in any other department of the Divine conduct—why do you look for it here? Besides, do you not see that if this rule is to be adopted, it bears equally against an uneducated ministry; that if—to use the language of South—"if God hath no need of our learning, he can have still less of your ignorance;" that, absolutely considered, he has no need even of your existence.

And surely you will not adopt this rule of conduct under the notion of honouring God. You surely do not expect that he will distinguish you in the last day as having pre-eminently proved your concern for the progress of his gospel, by having been pre-eminently unconcerned about the qualifications of the instruments you employed. Rely on it, true humility on this subject consists, not in neglecting the attainment of knowledge, but in estimating it at its proper worth; in feeling, like Newton, after sounding and navigating the ocean of science, as if one were only a child, sporting on its margin, and collecting its shells. And the Spirit of God is honoured, not by our coming into his presence empty-handed, but by imitating the Apostle Paul, and, after laying out all our resources in his service, feeling that our sufficiency is of God.

Let it be borne in mind, then, that the ministerial education we advocate presupposes personal piety; has mental development and discipline for its special object; is meant to correspond with the state of education generally; yields to Scriptural theology the chief place; and places itself in entire subordination to the agency of the Holy Spirit. Now I am not aware of any plausible objection to the education of the ministry, which one or other of these explanatory remarks does not legitimately answer; and, with the subject thus explained, we are prepared to proceed, secondly, to assign some of the grounds of our conviction of its importance.

II. 1. And, first, let me remark that *the desirableness of ministerial education is predetermined by the natural activity of the human mind, and by the tendency of the Gospel to excite that activity.* A variety of circumstances may concur to repress the active tendencies of the mind; but let the Gospel obtain admission into it, and, from that moment, the most torpid specimen of humanity is quickened into a new mental as well as moral life. Even the mind which was previously alive and vigorous, becomes concious of a new impulse to activity, and of a new sphere in which to

spend it. In finding a God, he finds the centre of all things; and henceforth the tendency of his mind is ever to harmonize the discordant, to arrange the displaced, and to assign to every thing its right position in the great circle which surrounds the Deity. In finding "the truth," he finds an infallible standard by which every thing is to be tested; henceforth he would fain try every pretension, weigh every claim, by its relation to this standard, and estimate every thing accordingly. And as the volume of nature is written in illuminated characters and pictured forms, purposely to awaken early curiosity, and to excite the inquiry, "what meaneth this?" so the volume of inspiration is constructed expressly to stimulate the activity of the renewed mind. Yes, the Bible is distinguished from every other book professedly divine—from the Shasters of the Brahmin, and the Koran of Mahomet—by its earnest commendations of knowledge, and by its power of exciting a thirst for it. It at once creates light, and courts it. Not only does it extol knowledge as a glory, but commands us to seek for it as a most sacred duty. But if Christianity thus awakens the mental and moral activity of man, and if the education we advocate consists in sustaining that activity and directing it aright, the desirableness of such education is no longer a doubtful question. It is an adjudged case; a settled question; settled, by no arbitration of ours, but by the predeterminate counsel of Him who gave to our mental constitution its activity, and to the Bible the power of arousing that activity. Unless, therefore, you do violence to the mind, and repress its activity, education to some extent becomes a religious necessity. And if education be thus desirable for every inquiring Christian mind, how much more important must it be for the man of God, who, in his public ministry, is, in effect, to aid in directing the religious education of others.

2. The importance of the education we advocate arises, secondly, *from the nature and contents of the Bible, and from the relation which the Christian minister sustains to it.* Revealed theology comes to us

in a volume consisting of a number of ancient books in the Hebrew and Greek languages. Is it any thing more than an act of ordinary propriety for its professed expounder to endeavour to make himself acquainted with all that it contains? then, must he be able to read it in the original tongues, and to avail himself of the ever-increasing treasures of sacred philology. The allusive and pictorial style of the sacred Scriptures renders indispensable a knowledge of geography and chronology, of oriental customs, institutions, and imagery. Nor can the professed expounder of the word of God be safely or consistently left in ignorance of the history of Biblical interpretation; showing, as it does, that the doctrinal theology of the church has always stood in close relationship to its hermeneutics.

The Bible insists on the doctrine of human depravity and ruin. The history of the ancient world is one unbroken record of facts illustrative of this doctrine. An acquaintance with that history gives a depth to the meaning of the Apostle in that sketch of the monster-man in his first chapter to the Romans, which no one ignorant of the ancient world can ever perceive; shows that man, so far from ameliorating his moral condition, exhibited an invariable tendency to become worse and worse; that the highest point of the world's civilization was the lowest point of its morality; that so far from reason or philosophy leading men to God, the religion which it constructed and decorated for them uniformly proved their greatest curse; that Christianity came into the midst of the world's systems, with all the freshness and originality of a divine conception direct from Heaven; that the character of Christ took the world by surprise, as the pure and perfect incarnation of infinite excellence; that his advent was almost as necessary to save the world from temporal, as from eternal ruin. And shall all this remain unknown to the man of God? Give him an opportunity of acquiring the learned languages; and you furnish him with a key to the knowledge of the whole.

The study of language, indeed, has a value of its

own. When pursued into its philosophy, it is both a mental discipline, an invigorating logical exercise, and is the study of mind itself. And on this independent ground alone, even were it devoid of all other advantage, we should be justified in urging the cultivation of the study. But when it is remembered that the knowledge of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages, besides giving the student access to the original Scriptures, opens to him the temples of ancient philosophy and worship, enabling him to see for himself the necessity, the evidence, and the influence of Divine Revelation; places before him the writings of the Greek and Latin fathers—that armoury of the Traditionists—with the power of extracting the useful, and of rejecting the vile; that it enables him to consult the valuable, the invaluable theological treatises to be found in the Latin works of foreign divines who have flourished since the Reformation; and that these are only some of its advantages—who does not feel the great importance of linguistic studies for the future expounder of the word of God?

The Bible abounds with *prophecies* relative to the monarchies of the ancient world, and to the church of God. These prophecies were recorded, of course, that, when they came to pass, we might believe. Many of them have come to pass; and the question arises, shall their fulfilment be known? Shall this part of the temple of Truth be shut up and useless; or shall it be opened, admired, and worshipped in? Here is an important branch of evidence for the truth of Divine Revelation; shall it lie waste and useless? shall God have spoken in vain? or shall his voice be heard? But if the man of God *is* to hear it, he must know something of ancient and modern history, that, by comparing the prophecy with the event, he may perceive its completion.

The church of God also has a history of its own. That part of its history recorded in the Bible is written for our instruction. But the record of its history did not end with what is there written; it has been con-

tinually carried on in laws and monuments, medals and inscriptions, memorials and documents of all kinds; and is replete with interest and instruction down to the present moment. Shall the whole exist in vain? Shall the past heresies and errors of the church afford no warning? shall its sins and apostacies excite no penitence? its divine preservation in the flames of persecution, no gratitude? its gradual corruption, no illustration of the New Testament prophecies concerning "the man of sin?" Shall its reformation excite no sense of obligation? nor the divine interpositions for its deliverances, its purification, and enlargement, no trust and zeal for the future? But all this—if it is to be turned to a profitable account—supposes a knowledge of *ecclesiastical* history.

To say that *natural science* may be made highly subservient to Christian theology, is only to say, in other words, that the God of nature is also the God of grace. Nature, with all her myriad voices, is ever lecturing on the existence, the providence, and the agency of God. All that has ever been written on the subject, from the writings of Aristotle to the Bridgewater Treatises, is only a comment on the sublime address of the Deity himself in the concluding portion of the book of Job. We believe, indeed, that all nature and providence are in strict analogy to religion —that all the works and ways of God are his own exposition of his word. What an important use has Butler made of this idea in his well-known Analogy! And we believe that hereafter it will be seen, that the universe was only a vast temple with the cross standing in the centre, and that to that centre every object and event was related and subordinated; that it never moved, but all things fell into its train; never stood, but they all bowed down before it; never spoke, but they all echoed its voice; and that the sight when beheld in the light of eternity, will fill all heaven with adoration. But we would have the preacher of the cross to see something of it now; and hence we would have him to be so far acquainted with the constitution

and course of nature as to feel the eminence on which he stands, and to be able, as he looks down from that eminence, to point out, with holy triumph, how all things are doing homage to the Gospel now.

3. The importance of the education we advocate appears, thirdly, *from the official relation which the minister sustains to the mind of his flock, as the expounder of the Bible, and the enforcer of its truths.* We have just seen the importance of his possessing a certain kind and amount of knowledge; now we have to regard his qualifications for imparting that knowledge to others. In his relation to the Bible, on the one side, he may be perfect; but in vain will be all his Biblical acquisitions, unless, in harmony with his relation to the minds of his people, on the other side, he has the power of clearly and efficiently communicating his knowledge.

For example: as the Christian minister has to address a mixed audience repeatedly every week, it is obviously important that he should be acquainted with the rules and the capabilities of the language in which he addresses them. To deny this, would be to affirm, in effect, that the most unintelligible jargon which folly ever uttered, was as well adapted for religious usefulness, as the reasoning of an Edwards, or the eloquence of a Whitefield.

Again; considering how desultory and vagrant the early mental habits of many of our students must have been; and how indispensable a power of patient, consecutive, and concentrated thinking is, not only to the pursuit of knowledge, but to the arrangement and employment of it when attained, we cannot but regard that study as beyond all price which at once corrects that parent evil, and confers this master power. Such a tendency we believe the pure mathematics preeminently to possess. "In these," says Lord Bacon, "I can report no deficience, except it be that men do not sufficiently understand their excellent use, in that they do remedy and cure many defects in the wit and faculties intellectual. For, if the wit be too dull, they

sharpen it; if too wandering, they fix it; if too inherent in the sense, they abstract it." And why are such studies so favourable to intellectual vigour? Simply because, by descending to the foundations of truth, they require the whole mind in perfect abstraction to descend along with it; by tracing the relations of truth, they exercise the faculty of comparison, and the power of reasoning; by exacting definitions, they teach precision; by dealing with principles, they make us feel that truth—all truth—is a most substantial and solemn thing—a thing to die for; and by pointing to its grand results, they lead to careful calculation of consequences, and to far-sighted and comprehensive views.

But besides this mental discipline, and this acquaintance with the powers of the language which he employs, ought not the future minister to know something of the intellectual and moral constitution of the minds on which he is to operate? There are but two substances in the universe—matter, and spirit. If he had to work in matter, he would be expected to know something of its properties. Is spirit so much more simple in its manifestations, and so much more yielding to the touch, that ignorance can deal with it as advantageously as knowledge? Vast and varied as are the phenomena of the material universe, the mind is made to respond to every part and property—made to respond to the phenomena of other worlds, and nobler systems; and the word of God, like a piece of heavenly music, is set for, and adapted to, the whole of man's complex nature; shall the hand which is weekly to essay the mighty instrument know nothing of its stops and keys? If he is not to confound emotion with principle, and impulse with habit; if he is not to mistake the natural instincts for virtues, nor the disinterested affections for selfish passions; if human responsibility and divine sovereignty are not to oppose and neutralize each other; if the pathology of the deceitful heart is to be skilfully treated, and a partial alleviation of threatening symptoms is not to be mis-

taken for a perfect cure, then must the man of God obtain an insight into the mental and moral philosophy of human nature.

Nor must he be left ignorant of the right methods of placing himself in felt contact with other minds. Who has not often admired the versatility of the Apostle Paul in this respect! As the Christian philosopher of Mars' Hill, you would hardly have recognized him for the same man as the ardent preacher of the Thessalonian synagogue, where he had been showing, from the Scriptures, that Jesus is the Christ: and how different again from the strain of the philosopher and the preacher, is the method of the same man, when as the dignified apologist and champion of the Christian faith, he makes a Felix tremble, and an Agrippa "almost a Christian." And is there nothing in this example worthy of imitation? Ought not the Christian advocate of the present day to understand the principles of argumentation—or Logic as an art—for the purpose of informing and convincing the judgment; of persuasion—or Rhetoric—for the purpose of moving the passions; of the evidence of testimony—to induce the right degree of respect for authority, and no more? For example; owing to the influence of vicious causes, some men are led to question the claims of the Bible. God has graciously supplied a variety of evidence—prophetic and miraculous, moral and historical—expressly adapted for the conviction of such men. But this very evidence may be so exhibited, and often has been, as to excite their ridicule and confirm their unbelief. Is it not important that those who profess to exhibit and enforce it, should themselves see its connection, feel its convincing reasonableness, and be acquainted with the most useful modes of its application? Hence, we claim for the man of God, who is placed, among other things, for "the defence of the Gospel," an acquaintance with the philosophy of evidence.

4. But the Christian minister is not related to his particular church merely:—the importance of the

education we advocate will appear if you consider, fourthly, *his relation to the age in which he lives.* The office of the ministry will be generally found to include three classes—men *behind* their day; men *before* their day; and men *of* their day. Those *behind* their day are always preaching to a former age; are conscious of alarm at every onward movement; and feel as little sympathy with their times as their times feel with them. Those who are *before* their day are generally but few in number; nor is it perhaps desirable that they should be numerous; though the office they fill is something like that of the ancient prophet—pointing to the future, and preparing the Church for its arrival. Standing on a loftier eminence than their contemporaries, their eye sweeps an ampler horizon; and, though the distant speck, no larger than a man's hand, enables them to speak of subjects which sound strange to the multitude, their voice never ceases to echo in the Church, correcting its views, animating its activity, and enlarging its expectations.

The men *of* their day are those who, marking its peculiarities, and falling in with its movements, accelerate its progress towards a better state of things. A considerable number of such the Church contains at present. They know, for instance, that it is their duty to assist in enlightening and directing public opinion; and, marking the mighty influence of the press for this end, they contribute what they can to the moral and religious literature of the day. Would that the number of such were greater; and that your College may help to increase them! Is the education of the masses becoming "the question of questions?" Aware how little the science is understood, and how powerful an engine it may be made for evil or for good, they are sensitively alive to the mode of its application; but this, of course, pre-supposes, to a certain extent, their own education. Are they placed for the defence of the Gospel? then, they need to know that Popery, on the one hand, is no longer, in its outward policy and tactics, the Popery of the sixteenth century;

and that infidelity, on the other, is no longer the infidelity of the century after; but a practical infidelity, with utilitarian science for its God, and the deification of man for its end; and they need skilfully to select and employ their weapons accordingly. Are they to shew themselves the philanthropists of the day? then, if many around them are seeking, from sincere but mistaken motives, to benefit the world by human expedients alone, they, so far from contenting themselves with merely decrying such expedients, must seek to surpass them by the strenuous application of God's remedy. If other sections of the church than that to which they belong are abroad in the field of conflict, they are to mark their movements, not to envy, but to emulate their activity, and to share in their success. If the world of Paganism is crying for instruction and spiritual help, they should know something of the places to be occupied, and of the facilities for taking possession. And as the demand on the resources of the Church goes on increasing, they should be prepared to bring forth the strong reasons of the Gospel for entire self-consecration. And in thus saying that a ministry to be effective must be adapted to its age, and that this supposes education, what are we saying after all, but that God is conducting the affairs of his kingdom on a plan—that in every age that plan advances—that his ministers are to mark that advance and to fall in with it; and that in proportion as they adjust their movements to his—link themselves on to his plans, and keep pace with his progress, they move with the force of omnipotence, simply by moving in a line, and in harmony with it.

5. The importance of the education we advocate will appear if you consider, next, that *a firm and enlightened confidence in the sufficiency of the Gospel, and in its ultimate and universal triumph, is an essential element of an effective ministry.* Our last particular contemplated the minister in his relation to the present; here, we regard him rather as related to the future. A conflict is before him—a conflict of

opinion, not only with foes without the pale of the visible church, but with foes within. Shall he advance to it timidly, or full of heart and hope? Leave him in doubt respecting the sufficiency of the Gospel as a remedy for the world's misery, and you impart feebleness to his ministry, and indifference to the diffusion of the truth; you dispose him to seek for aid from that very world it is appointed instrumentally to save; you fill his mind with alarm at every new test to which the discoveries of science may subject the Gospel; and thus you invite some modern Celsus to repeat one of the oldest charges alleged against it, that it fears the light of science; and you encourage the attacks of a world which it was intended to lead in glorious triumph. But let him see the homage which the truth has invariably received from science; let him see how the comparative study of languages, which was at one time deemed inimical to the Mosaic history of the dispersion, is now tending to corroborate that history, and causing men, in this respect, "with one mind and one mouth to glorify God;" how the further the physiology of man has been examined, the more evident has become the common parentage of the human race; how monumental history, once summoned from the cavern temples and tombs of India and Egypt to contradict the Mosaic chronology, has shamed its advocates, and confessed itself of comparatively modern date; how, when the famed zodiacs were brought from Egypt, and Astronomy itself was supposed to be enlisted against the Bible, they turned out to be mere monuments of astrological folly, and the very "stars in their courses fought against" the infidel attempt; and how, when Geology was invoked to the conflict with the cosmogony of Moses, "the earth literally disclosed her dead"—the fossil remains of successive creations—proclaiming the fact that miracles, so far from being impossible, have ever belonged to the course and constitution of nature, viewed on a comprehensive scale;—let the student of Revelation know these facts, and, like the servant of

the prophet, his eyes will be opened to behold that the object of his solicitude is surrounded as with horses and chariots of fire. Let him know that the believers in Divine Revelation have never had to engage in its defence, but they have returned from the conflict laden with fresh spoil; that many, once known as its bitter foes, abandoning the arms wherein they trusted, have swelled the ranks of its enlightened friends; that, however threatening the aspect of a discovery on its first appearance, sooner or later it has uniformly given in its adhesion to the claims of Christianity, and has inscribed its name on the mountain monument of her evidences; that Archæology bringing its medals and inscriptions in profusion, and Literature its rolls, and documents, and stores of critical science, have poured them like gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, at her feet:—and he will see that everything has "turned out rather for the furtherance of the Gospel."

Would you augment his confidence in it still further! Shew him how perfectly it is adapted to the nature of man, and to the progress of society—how full it is of principles; how thickly sown with the seeds of things; how suggestive and fertile of good; so that no truly benevolent society or effort is known to us, however original and novel it at first appeared, the principle of which the Bible had not anticipated, and been always enforcing. And, convinced of this, will he not cherish the assurance that many an unthought of agency for good lies slumbering yet in its hallowed page?—that many a verse, familiar in appearance as the humble pebble which encloses a precious gem, conceals the type and principle of future agencies destined to scatter their blessings over the earth?—and that every such agency is, in the hand of God, as certain of fulfilling its course, and answering its end, as if it came visibly accredited with the seal of omnipotence; that we ourselves are not borne through the regions of space by virtue of our union with the globe we inhabit more certainly, than such instrumentality is destined to succeed by virtue of its

union with that Divine plan which is ever in progress—ever moving steadily and majestically towards the high throne of God, and bearing the world along with it. An enlightened confidence in the Divine adaptation and sufficiency of the Gospel will render the man of God independent of every other aid—thoroughly furnished for every emergency and every duty; while the firm persuasion of its ultimate triumph will impart an ardour to his activity, and a moral dignity to his onward step, eminently conducive, through God, to the efficiency of his labours.

6. With our views of the importance of an educated ministry thus sustained, are we not warranted to expect, sixthly, that *its importance will be borne out by a reference to history, ancient and modern, sacred and ecclesiastical?* And, here, need I remind you that Moses, "God's first pen," as Lord Bacon calls him, and the instrumental founder of the Jewish economy, was rich in all the lore of Egypt; and that from the time of Samuel, with only one exception, so far as we know,—that of Amos—the prophets and great public teachers of the people were taken by God from "the schools of the prophets," where they had been taught the learning of the country, and of the day? Descending to the opening of the Christian economy, need I remind you that the Apostles, after enjoying for three years the instructions of the Great Teacher himself, were then made learned by a miracle?—that he who was last called—the most useful of them all, and who filled the Roman empire with the sound of salvation—was the scholar and philosopher Paul?—and that he, in condemning, as he did, a false philosophy, was in effect pronouncing a commendation of the true? Need I refer to the high estimate in which education was held by the ancient fathers of the Church, by reminding you of the fact that they deprecated the edict of the emperor Julian—forbidding Christians to lecture in the public schools of science and literature—as more destructive to the Christian faith than all the sanguinary persecutions inflicted by his predecessors? And why

did that philosopher of persecution adopt such a measure—but because he well knew the wounds which learning, in the hands of the Christian apologists, had inflicted on Paganism; and that, as Waddington remarks, it was comparatively useless to oppress the Christians by bodily coercion, or even by civil degradation, unless he could at the same time degrade their minds by ignorance.

The time, alas, arrived, when they began to choose that ignorance for themselves. At the close of the sixth century, Gregory the Great rejected from the service of religion that learning of which he himself was destitute. How appropriate that the man who first authoritatively extinguished the light of secular knowledge should have been the first potentate in the new kingdom of popish darkness; for he it was who, finding the various elements of that great system of imposture ready to his hand, organized them into that gigantic structure of evil which for so many ages stood erect with its foot on the neck of the civilized world. How suggestive the fact that he who said, in effect, "let there be mental darkness," and he who said, "let the man of sin arise and triumph," should have been one and the same individual!

Let it not be supposed, indeed, that we attach any spiritual value to mere knowledge. We are even free to admit that Germany, the nation perhaps the most profoundly learned, has long been the most prolific of infidelity. But much even of that scepticism is only the natural reaction of that mental darkness and depression in which ignorance so long detained the nations. Yes, ignorance has had her millenium; a long and dreary period, during which not merely learning became extinct, but almost the curiosity and desire to learn; the Bible became a book comparatively lost and unknown; and the feeble glimmering of knowledge which remained in the hands of a few was employed, not to enlighten the people, but to delude; and proved sufficient to hold the enfeebled mind of Christendom thine most servile subjugation.

With what signal effect the weapon of sanctified learning may be wielded, let the history of the Reformation from that fearful condition of the Church attest. Would you know the opinion of the Reformers themselves on the subject? "If we lose the learned languages by our neglect," said Luther, "we shall lose the Gospel." "An unlearned theology," said Melancthon, "is an Iliad of evils;"—a sentiment often reiterated by Calvin also. Need I remind you that our Puritan and Nonconformist forefathers—the champions of truth and liberty in their day—and whose standard theology continues to nourish the piety of the Church, were learned divines? Need I add further that among the most useful men of modern days, have been a Doddridge and a Watts, a Wesley and a Whitefield, of England; and, of America, an Edwards, a Bellamy, and a Dwight; and that, besides being educated themselves, they advocated the Collegiate preparation of others for the ministry—some of them actually presiding in such institutions?

Far be it from us to deny that God has greatly blessed the preaching of some uneducated ministers. "We therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." He did not bless them, however, *on account* of their ignorance, but *in spite* of it. It was not their ignorance which he blessed, but certain other qualities which they possessed in common with the educated man of God—qualities which a wise education would have aided to develope and direct—zeal, and devotedness to the glory of God. On the other hand, could we take you to listen to some of this class, you would feel at once that their preaching—in which distinctions are frequently made without differences, assertions are mistaken for arguments, and illustrations of truth substituted for doctrines—is of a character to limit their usefulness to a single class of hearers, and to disparage them in the eyes even of some of that class. And how many a minister of this description, could you address him on the subject, would feelingly deplore his own want of early education, and set forth the disadvantages

under which he consequently labours. And thus you might easily obtain, from your own observation, an illustration of the same truth which history in all ages so abundantly confirms, that there exists a relation between religion and an educated ministry, and that, where the latter is wanting, the former invariably tends to superstition, fanaticism, or extinction.

And now, what, after all, is the summary of the various arguments in support of an educated ministry, but simply this—that ignorance is imperfection; and that, in the case of the man of God, we are anxious to lessen that imperfection as much as possible? What is it but saying, that, as sin is the parent of all voluntary ignorance, and as the gospel is the great remedy for sin, we believe it was meant, directly or indirectly, to remedy such ignorance as well as every other evil; and that we are anxious that the man of God should be an instance of its remedial influence in this, as well as in every other respect? What is it but saying, that, if he speak for God, he should speak according to the rules of language; that, if he attempt to reason for God, he should not do it irrationally, but according to the rules of reasoning; that, if he profess to be an interpreter of the Bible, he should spare no pains necessary to render himself a correct expositor—"an able minister of the New Testament." In a word, what is it but saying that the man of God should be made as acceptable an offering to the Head of the Church, and as efficient an agent for the diffusion of the Gospel, as his own endeavours and the endeavours of the Church, combined with the prayers of both for the impartation of the Holy Spirit, can possibly render him?

III. Such being some of the grounds of the importance of an educated ministry, I might enlarge, thirdly, *on the consequent obligations*. The nature of the occasion, however, which has now assembled us, reminds me that you are already alive to those obligations, and allows me to restrict myself to the bare enumeration of particulars.

I will only remind you, therefore, that as your sense of the importance of an educated ministry committed you to the erection of a College, so now the erection of that College commits you to a series of corresponding duties. By selecting the more capable and intelligent, as well as pious, among the youthful members of your churches, to enjoy its advantages; by fairly estimating its pecuniary wants and contributing liberally to its support; by allowing its students the full enjoyment of its entire course, instead of hastily terminating their studies, and hurrying them into the ministry unprepared; and by giving the preference, when called to choose a pastor, not to one of ignorant, but of intelligent piety; by these means you cannot fail, under God, to secure an intelligent ministry. And by placing these means in your power, the Head of the Church is leaving you to say whether he shall be served by an illiterate, or by an educated ministry.

Brethren, you have entered on a great work. Bear with me while I exhort you to view it chiefly in the highest light. View it, if you please, as an honour and a service to the Denomination of Christians to which you belong; and, as such, it richly deserves their practical thanks. But regard it chiefly as belonging to that great system of agencies by which God is subduing all things to himself. Contemplate it chiefly in that only relation in which it can be invested with enduring importance; as included in that infinite plan, which subordinates all our movements to its own designs, and which, while it demands the strenuous activity of every agent in the universe, yet absolutely stands in need of none; and thus regarded, you will feel ennobled while rendering it the humblest service. Think of it, if you please, as a movement called for by the circumstances of the time—as a work for the day; but fail not in your holiest moments to regard it as touching the past eternity and the future; as associated with that "ministry of reconciliation" which was determined on before the foundation

of the world, and with that "perfecting of the saints" —that "edifying of the body of Christ"—which is to be the theme of grateful admiration in the eternity to come. Think of it as a means which God will employ for preparing himself agents in days to come—days when nobler services shall be rendered to his cause than we have ever attempted, and when loftier motives shall inspire their performance. Thus regarding it, you will feel that you are living for the future as well as for the present; that you are setting in motion trains of ever augmenting influence, which, deriving their efficacy from heaven, shall hasten the completion of the kingdom of God. Cherish the conviction, if you please, that your new Institution will combine with other and similar means to raise the educational character of the Christian ministry, and thus to increase its usefulness; and that, on this account, it will deserve the suffrages and enjoy the confidence of thousands. But, hasten at once to place it under the guidance, and at the disposal, of Him, "for whom are all things, and by whom all things consist;" and you will have secured for it a patronage which will bring good for it even out of evil, and which will make it subservient to the highest end. Place it, by earnest prayer, in the light of his countenance; and its highest prosperity is secured; and on you he will confer the honour of presenting to the coming generation of Christians, a class of ministers whose only motto will be, "For us to live is Christ."

This he is expecting at your hands. Link it as a humble instrumentality to the cross of Christ; and, then, what though no patron saint gives it a name, and no royal munificence endows it, "the Highest himself shall establish" it; and what though no lofty pretensions to Apostolic succession be made for its sons, the Spirit himself shall descend to anoint them to their office, and to ratify and bless the work of your hands. In humble dependence and grateful faith dedicate the service to your Lord; and to you he will, in effect, repeat his ancient promise, "from this day will I bless you."

THE CONVERSION OF THE JEWS:

A SERMON

DELIVERED BEFORE THE BRITISH SOCIETY* FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL AMONG THE JEWS, AT THE SCOTCH CHURCH, REGENT SQUARE, LONDON, APRIL, 1843.

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! ROMANS XI. 33.

PROBABLY many of you have listened to every Lecture of the series which the Discourse of this evening is to bring to a close. You first beheld the Israelites invested by the hand of God with peculiar distinctions; for "to them pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; theirs are the fathers, and of them as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." Having glanced at their high prerogatives in the past, your eye was then pointed to their great destination in the future. "For God hath not cast away his people whom he did foreknow." The eye of prophecy is fixed on them still. For them, some of the choicest promises of the Bible are reserved. And a theatre awaits them, in which their every movement shall excite the devout admiration of the Church, and engross the attention of the world.

* The single object of the "British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Jews," is the spiritual good of the ancient people of God. For this it seeks to engage the prayers, the influence, and the

Having had your minds prepared—as I suppose was the intention of those who drew up the plan of the series—by the comprehensive views which these introductory discourses would suggest; your attention was then called to that succession of topics which serves, as so many links, to connect the ancient prerogatives of the Jew with his final destination. You listened to a description of his national characteristics. You saw his people dispersed, his nation exploded, and scattered in fragments over the face of the earth. You surveyed their present condition; and you saw some looking with longing eyes to Judea; others, sensualized and engrossed by the world; others, lapsing into Infidelity—all, united in their detestation of Christianity; and, as you gazed on this spectacle of spiritual death, you were ready to inquire in despondency, "Can these dry bones live?" The subject of their conversion then engaged your attention; and you saw, in a light which removed all apprehension—the light of inspiration,—that their recovery is possible, probable, certain.

Next, you were reminded, or were to have been reminded, that, in order to realize this grand consummation many and formidable obstacles have to be surmounted—obstacles arising from adverse influences act-

active co-operation of *all* who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. During the year or two of the Society's existence, approved Agents have been employed in visiting the Jews, conversing with inquirers, and distributing Tracts, and portions of the Holy Scriptures, in the Hebrew and other languages. The Committee have also published in Hebrew a selection of passages from the Old Testament Scriptures, and the Epistle to the Hebrews in the same language.

During the Spring of 1843, a course of Lectures, with a view of exciting an increased interest in the operations of the Society, were delivered in the National Scotch Church, Regent-square, by the Rev. Messrs. James Hamilton, A. M., F. A. Cox, D.D., L.L. D., T. Archer, A. M., J. Bennett, D.D., E. Henderson, D.D., J. C. Burns, A. M., H. F. Burder, D.D., J. Morrison, D.D., J. S. Stamp, and J. Harrris, D.D. These lectures, delivered by Ministers of six evangelical denominations, were afterwards published by the Committee of the Society, and the closing one of the series is now submitted to the American Christian community. Ed.

ing on the Jews from without, as well as from their own hereditary prejudices. The perception of these led you doubtfully to inquire, "Who is sufficient for these things?" But on listening, next, to the encouragements which Christians have to make the attempt, you saw that their sufficiency is of God. With such incentives and encouragements, you saw next, how stringent and solemn are the obligations of Christians to seek their conversion! Impressed these with obligations, you were prepared to consider, next, the means for acting in harmony with them. And, then, as a further incentive to employ these means, you were conducted to a point whence you could survey the benefits which will accrue to the Church from the conversion of the Jews; and where you could luxuriate, by anticipation, in the blessedness of the latter days.

An important advantage arising from such a comprehensive and connected view of a great subject is the number of side views, so to speak, which it presents to a reflective mind in the course of its progress from point to point—awakening interesting trains of thought, independently of those which may be under consideration at the moment—affording it glimpses of the wide and unsuspected relations of truth, and anticipations of their distant application and practical results. In this respect all that you have already heard on the present interesting series, may be regarded as having tended to prepare you for the point which we have now reached. While listening to the successive lectures, you have been standing, in effect, with Balaam on the mountains of Moab; and, while looking down on the thousands of Israel, was not your eye insensibly attracted to the guiding pillar of cloud and of fire? You have stood with Ezekiel on the banks of the Chebar; and have been rapt in the far-reaching visions of Isaiah and of Daniel;—have you not one while admired the wisdom, goodness, and power, which have at all times been brought to bear on the history of this remarkable people;—at another, the vast extent of the Divine plans with which they are bound up,

—and, at another, the mysterious destiny which yet awaits them? Now, all those passing views of the Divine conduct, which you may have caught, tending to excite astonishment and awe, adoration and joy, the subject of this evening is calculated so to combine and exhibit, as to engage your steady and prolonged attention. That subject, appropriately selected for this concluding lecture, is, the glory which will redound to God from the conversion of the Jews. In that event, there will be a summing up of all their long and eventful history; and so vast is the revenue of praise which that conclusion will bring to God, that Christ would fain have his Church, in every age, to foretaste the joy, and to antedate the song. Inspiration has even prepared the strain. And to a part of that language, caught by the Apostle Paul from the kindred soul of Isaiah, I would now direct your attention; with an earnest prayer, that our hearts may be in harmony with the sentiment which it breathes: "*Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!*" Rom. xi. 33.

I. Now, among the various considerations which will prompt this exclamation, on the conversion of the Jews, and which should influence us in the anticipation of that event, one is the fact that *their national preservation through so long a tract of time will furnish a wonderful illustration of the Divine power.* Their history in this respect is unparalleled. They can look back along a line of ancestry, compared with which that of the Norman peer, and the Saxon noble, are but of yesterday. Nations which did not begin to exist till long after the Jew had acquired a history, have long ago run their course and perished; but he is unchanged. The Roman, the Athenian, the Babylonian, is now only a name—the shadow of a name; yet when the most ancient of these powers was laying the foundation of its existence, the Jew could already trace back a genealogy of centuries. As the modern traveller surveys the remains of the arch of Titus at

Rome, he feels himself bewildered in endeavouring to realize the distant date of its erection—and yet it commemorates only the last of a long series of Jewish dispersions. You read of the fragments of antiquity dug up from the ruins of Babylon, and your mind is carried still further back than by the Roman arch; but the Jew possibly formed that Babylonian brick, and imprinted on it those arrow-headed characters. The pyramids of Egypt take your imagination still further back; the Jew not improbably helped to build the oldest of them. Enter the most ancient of the royal tombs at Thebes, and mark the national physiognomies painted on the walls—you recognise that of the Jew unaltered to the present day. Time itself was young, when the Lord said unto Abraham, "I will surely make of thee a great nation."

Nor will any of the ordinary means of national preservation account for their continuance. They have not, like the Chinese, been stationary, and built in from the rest of the human family. From about the year 740 before Christ, till the final destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, they suffered as many dispersions, partial or entire, as there were centuries. Their wanderings in the wilderness, relieved by temporary encampments, may be regarded as an emblem of all their subsequent history. Foreign help and alliances will not explain it. For, besides the fiercest commotions within, they have sustained, unaided, a quick succession of the most sanguinary invasions from without. They have known the degradation of slavery, the chains of captivity, and persecution in all its forms. Arms, climate, genius, politics, equally fail to explain it. For they have been crumbled, and scattered over the face of the earth; and yet they exist. They have used every dialect, and lived in every latitude of civilized man. They have cried by reason of their taskmasters on the banks of the Nile; by the waters of Babylon they have sat down and wept; the Jordan, the Tiber, the Thames, the Mississippi, have alike quenched their thirst. Paganism has made itself

drunk with their blood. Popery has kindled and rejoiced over the fires which consumed them; and Mahometanism has chased and smitten them with untiring hate; and yet they exist. Old empires which oppressed them have fallen; but the Jew has lived on amidst their ruins. Young nations have started into being, and he has been present to mingle with their elements;—mingling, but never uniting; a river flowing through the ocean, but never losing its distinct character and existence. For "from the top of the rocks I see him; and from the hills I behold him; lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations."

And, as if to complete the wonder of their continued existence, the probability is, according to the most recent and exact statistics, that their number at this moment is very nearly the same as it was on their leaving Egypt under Moses—somewhere about three millions and a half.

Now, the only way in which their preservation can be accounted for is by accepting the scriptural solution of the fact, and ascribing it to the miraculous exercise of the Divine Power. This, indeed, is very generally admitted already. The visions of the poet are haunted by the fact, as by a voice from the invisible world. The philosophic historian confesses that he has no place for it in all his generalizations; and refers it to the mysteries of Providence. The enlightened Christian recognises in it the presence and agency of Him who hath said, "I am God, I change not: therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." The Jew himself is, of course, willing to ascribe it to the hand of God, for it ministers to his self-importance. But when, in the best, the highest respect, he "shall be turned unto the Lord," in how different a sense will he trace the preservation of his people to the Divine Being! A time of conversion is a period of reflection and review. How many a man converted late in life—converted towards the close of a long and hazardous career—awakes as from a dream to spend

the rest of his days in grateful astonishment at the power which "preserved him in Christ Jesus" till he was called. He clearly sees that his past history exhibits one continued series of Divine interpositions for his safety; and as his fellow-Christians listen to his tale of the divine goodness, "they glorify God in him." But here will be a whole people converted in the evening of time. And when it shall be remembered that they were called in the morning of time; that they were then the subjects of Divine impressions; that God himself could say concerning them, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy espousals, and the love of thy youth, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness;" that their promising appearances vanished like the early dew; that, with few intermissions, they had ever since been running the gauntlet of the nations; buffeted by a blind and bloodthirsty world; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; with what new emphasis and enlarged meaning will they have to sing, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,—now may Israel say;—if it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us; then had they swallowed us up quick. Then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Blessed be the Lord who hath not given us a prey to their teeth. Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth!" And so manifestly will their continued existence as a nation be then traceable to the hand of God, that the entire Church, as with one voice, shall ascribe the glory to him alone.

II. But will it not further redound to the glory of God when it shall be seen that the preservation of the Jews has not been effected by *mere* power—by the capricious exercise of blind force, or arbitrary might,—but that, *from first to last, that power was under the guidance of wisdom, or was exercised according to a plan?* A new light is dawning on the mind of men respecting the existence and the nature of this plan. History is beginning to be written in a new manner. Formerly the historian was only required to collect and

to record facts. But at length it has occurred to him that all the facts of history are, in a variety of ways connected; that could the principles of this connexion be traced and developed, it would be found that all history forms one organic whole; and, hence, to trace and to expound these principles has now come to be considered the highest office of the historian—the very *philosophy* of history—a philosophy dignified by the name of "The New Science."

It should be remembered however by every lover of the Bible that *its* histories were never written in any other way. Some of the modern writers of history indeed are free to acknowledge, and even to lay stress on the fact as very remarkable, that the man who made one of the first sustained and consistent attempts to exhibit the facts of universal history in ideal unity should have been an ecclesiastic—Bossuet; that philosophy should have been indebted to theology for this prolific suggestion. But Biblical history, I repeat, was never written in any other way. It both states the facts, and the principles which unite them. True, after sketching, by a few masterly strokes, the history of the race from the creation to the dispersion at Babel, it does not follow each branch of the human family, but confines its history to one—that of the Jews. But in the history of that one, you have, in effect, a type of the whole. And more; in the history of that one, you frequently catch glimpses of the others—glimpses of them at the most eventful moments of their existence. You see them, for example, as on the plains of Dura—the world in an act of idolatrous worship;—or you hear the tramp of their armies going forth to depopulate whole regions; or you hear the crush of towers and thrones smitten by an invisible hand. And more still; the Bible is prophetic as well as historic; affords us visions of the future as well as records of the past. Here the idea of the unity and universality of Providence in the history of man is fully brought out. Before Herodotus, called the Father of History, had begun to amass his confused ma-

terials, Isaiah had sung the glory of the *latter* day; and Daniel had foretold the kingdoms which would arise, and the order of their succession, to the end of time.

Again, then, I repeat the Bible never spoke of the course of human events but as conducted on a great plan.—And *with this peculiarity*, that from the time of the promise to Abraham, "that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed," the entire plan was regulated in relation to his posterity. Nay, ages earlier than that, the plan began to evolve. "Ask thy father," said Moses, "and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." Yes, before Moses, before Pisgah itself, from which Moses looked down on the promised land, existed, His eye had looked down from the height of his sanctuary, and had beheld prospectively that Sinai whence his law should be given—that Zion which should be crowned with his temple—and that Calvary which should receive the mystery of the Cross. The great principle on which the habitable part of the globe was moulded and mapped out, was a principle of relation to his chosen people. And, as the great drama of Providence unfolded, act after act, the civilized portion of the world invariably found itself involved with that people. Think of those noble Psalms, the 78th, 105th, and 106th, in which you have the recapitulations of their early history; do you not hear Jehovah, as he leads them through the nations, saying, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm?" Are they invaded and oppressed?—"Who delivered up Jacob to be a spoil, and Israel to the plunderers?—Was it not Jehovah?" saith the prophet; "He against whom they had sinned." Does the Assyrian monarch afflict Israel?—"The Assyrian, saith God, is the rod in *my* hand." Does the Persian deliver Israel?—"I called thee distinctly by thy name," saith God to Cyrus; "I

made honourable mention of thee, though thou knewest me not." Did nations change hands in consequence of the Persian movement? "I," saith God to his people, "I have given Egypt for thy ransom; Cush and Seba for thee." The transfer was Persia's reward for Israel's liberation. Have the ancient persecutors of Israel perished? Their destruction was foretold; and this was the reason assigned for it: "Jehovah hath a day of vengeance, a year of recompense in vindication of Zion." "Search out," saith the prophet, "search out from the book of Jehovah, and read: not one of these shall fail." And when, at length, "the time shall have come, yea, the set time to favour Zion"—for even that is foretold; when in the light of a Divine teaching they shall search out of the book of Jehovah, and read; when they shall see that in all their wanderings from God, he has never allowed them to pass beyond the lines of a plan which his own finger had traced out; that, as often as they essayed to do so, they invariably encountered some form of evil arresting their progress, which He had foretold; that, in that comprehensive plan, every useful agent had his post assigned, every event its hour foreknown, everything was calculated and foreseen; and, yet, that the whole series was so forelaid that the moral freedom of no accountable being should be violated; what ground will there be for repeating the ancient appeal of Joshua, and saying, "Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing has failed of all that the Lord your God spake concerning you: all have come to pass, and not one thing hath failed." "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

III. Will it not further redound to the glory of God when it shall appear *that the entire plan of his conduct towards Israel has directly tended to promote their highest welfare by illustrating the great principles of his moral government?* Many of these principles are indicated in the context. Here is the principle of *mediation*—of making the conduct or the relationship of

one the reason for blessing others. Early in the history of the Church had the Jews been familiarized with this principle; for it lies at the basis of human salvation. Again and again, by type, and promise, and declaration, had they been reminded of it. But as often had they forgotten it, and self-righteously assumed that they were favoured for their own sakes alone; or else had persuaded themselves that the Almighty no longer acted on the principle. But, no, saith the apostle, "God hath not cast away his people." They are still beloved: but they are beloved, as they ever have been, for the fathers' sakes." Now their conversion will, at length, establish this fact. It will show them that they have never been absolutely renounced; that in all their wanderings and toils they have still been remembered by God as the seed of Abraham his friend. It will expound the great fact why Abraham himself was beloved. They will then see that there never was, never can be, but "one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus;" the day of whose coming Abraham saw, and was glad.

Justice is another principle of the Divine conduct. "Behold," saith the apostle, "the goodness and severity of God: on them who fell, severity." And looking back on the long track of their history, they will behold it covered from the first with the memorials of the Divine displeasure against sin. They will see that instead of making his love a reason for allowing them to sin with impunity, He has ever been saying, in effect, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities;" and that every stroke of his fatherly chastisement was intended to bring them in penitence to his feet.

Has it always been a peculiar feature of the Divine conduct *to bring good out of evil?* In the history and conversion of the Jews this Divine prerogative will be seen displayed on the most magnificent scale. It will be seen that He has made the mutual jealousy of the Jew and Gentile an occasion of good

to each; thus converting, by a Divine alchemy, the poison of human hostility into a cup of blessing—a sacramental cup of everlasting friendship. It will be seen that he has taken occasion from the unbelief and temporary rejection of the one, to visit the other with the means of salvation. The apostacy of the human race was the occasion of Israel's election at the first. And when, after repeated apostasies, Israel was abandoned, that became the occasion of salvation to the Gentiles,—"The casting away of them was the reconciling of the world," saith the apostle; the "fall of them was the enriching of the Gentiles." The history of Israel, indeed, will afford many other illustrations of the same great principle. Their slavery in Egypt was a time of merciful visitation for that country. Their seventy years' rejection and captivity in Babylon were calculated to enlighten and to bless the people of that empire. Their departure from Egypt and Babylon was a loss to those nations, and the gain of Judea. But these, and all the similar instances which had occurred, were summed up and generalized, so to speak, by that great "casting off" referred to by the apostle; —an event so great as to form the line which divides the history of the world into two parts. And then, again, at the time of their conversion, they will see with amazement that the very act which completed their guilt, and which became the means of salvation to the Gentiles—namely, the rejection and crucifixion of Christ—has become the means of their own salvation; that in gratifying their own enormous malice, they were unconsciously doing whatsoever the Divine "hand and counsel determined before to be done;" that in preparing an ignominious cross, they were blindly erecting the very throne on which the rejected Jesus should reign, "a prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel and the remission of sins."

Is it another grand characteristic of the Divine procedure, so to time and to distribute his judgments and mercies, as *to make us feel our entire dependence on him?* My own deep conviction is, that this is not

merely a principle ; but that it is the great all-encompassing and all-interpreting principle of the Divine conduct—and that on its ultimate triumph depend alike the happiness of the creature, and the glory of God. Would you know, for example, why it was that Israel, when brought out of Egypt, was not led straight to Canaan? Listen to the inspired reply : " Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know ; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live:"—in other words, it was part of a great system of moral discipline, designed experimentally to convince them of their entire dependence upon God. Would you know why it was that the coming of Christ was so long delayed ; and why it was that the Jews were cast off—that their conversion did not take place at the commencement of the Christian dispensation, instead of being for so many centuries delayed? Doubtless other reasons repose in the bosom of infinite Wisdom ; but hear the reason which, in the context, *is* assigned, " God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." In other words, he waited for the Gentiles, till they had completed the great experiment which proved, that the world by its wisdom would never arrive at the knowledge of God. And he is now waiting for the Jews, till it shall be evident—evident to themselves—that all ground for self-dependence has utterly perished. Were he to cut short that great experiment which man is bent on making—of trying to do without the grace of God—man would not be prepared to appreciate the Divine interposition. It would seem as if man must be allowed to try his last resource, exhaust his last expedient, before he will submit to be saved by sovereign

mercy. God therefore waits; waits till man has found that his every unaided effort has plunged him deeper in misery and guilt; waits till sin has bound its victim hand and foot, and has dragged him to the edge of the pit. Thus he waited for the Gentiles, and thus he is now delaying for the Jews; that, having convicted them all of unbelief and utter helplessness, he might have mercy upon all in a manner most honourable and glorious to his sovereign grace.

Who by searching can find out God! How long-suffering the patience which can thus bear with a course of human provocation ever raging and ever increasing! How vast the reach and compass of that plan which counts ages as moments, and takes in the end from the beginning! How stable that purpose which, before the foundation of the world, fixed its eye on an object which is still future—from which nothing has been able to divert it—on which it is still fixed—and to which everything else is subordinated! "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." How worthy of infinite perfection is that process by which evil is not merely thwarted, but made productive of good; by which, in all ages, grapes are gathered from the thorns of human nature, and figs from thistles; by which the wrath of man—not his faith merely, not his obedience, not his humility—but the very wrath of man, his worst passions armed and raging, are made to praise God; made to yield notes which reach the skies only to blend with the song of the seraphim. And how utterly unfathomable are the reasons on which the great scheme is constructed! One of these, indeed, the apostle assigns—that the whole is designed to humble man, and to redound to the glory of the grace of God. But even this does not enable us to fathom the deeps of the Divine counsels. We want the strength and the skill necessary to use the immeasurable line. Here even an apostle fails. For after having sounded his way for awhile among the mere shallows of this ocean, he no sooner launches out into the deep, and there reverently essays to fathom

it, than, suddenly seized with an overwhelming awe, he gives up the attempt, exclaiming, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

IV. But what if this great system of discipline, after displaying for ages the principles of the Divine government, and directly tending to lead the Jews to repentance, should leave them as it found them—worse than it found them? *Would not their conversion, after all, to the faith of Christ*, redound, to a degree inconceivable, to the glory of God? This is our *fourth* particular.

And, here, you will see the relation of our preceding remarks to the point we have now reached. The strength of a mechanical power is estimated by the degree of resistance which it overcomes. And the honour which will accrue to the grace of God in the conversion of the Jews, is to be estimated, partly, by the amount and the duration of their previous resistance to that grace.

1. Now, viewed in this light, you will see that their conversion will reflect transcendent honour on *the power of the grace* which effects it. For you are to remark that we are not now speaking of the conversion of a people who, like the South Sea Islander, had never before enjoyed the light of Revelation; but of a people who, in this sense, have never been in darkness; to whose ears the voice of God was a familiar sound; on whose eyes the fires of Sinai and the light of "the day star from on high" had alike shone; but in vain. And yet they are at length to tremble at that voice, and to rejoice in that light. Nor are we speaking of a people who, like most of the converts from among ourselves, are, prior to their change, merely indifferent to Christianity, and who are taking it for granted that they are already converted; but of a people who have ever been actively hostile to all spiritual religion; a people to whom the martyred Stephen could say, "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist

the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?" a people whose fathers blasphemed the Holy Ghost, and thus incurred the fearful guilt of the unpardonable sin; a people therefore who will be found inheriting all those evil dispositions which had never ceased to resist the Spirit of God; and yet they are, at length, to cry out for this grieved and resisted Spirit, and to yield themselves up to his power. Nor are we speaking of this people as nominally converted merely—simply proselyted to the faith—as many of the European nations were; but as renewed in the spirit of their minds—changed in their very heart of hearts. The conversion of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost was the great miracle of the Christian economy. The sudden transformation of three thousand souls was a new thing in the earth. For a multitude just fresh from Calvary to receive as their Saviour the being they had there nailed in deadly hatred to a cross, proclaimed a change of their entire nature which God alone could effect. But here a still greater change is to be seen; the conversion of a people who, besides the hatred of their forefathers to our blessed Lord, are naturally filled with distrust and hatred of all his professed followers by whom, for ages, they have been persecuted. Compared with this, no change the world has yet witnessed deserves to be named. Conceive, if you can, of the revolution which your nature must undergo before you could adopt Hindooism;—adopt it not merely by bowing in its temples, and conforming to its ritual, but by actually believing in its idol gods. You feel that, before you could do this, you must be entirely re-made. Nor does the Jew feel less deeply that to be transformed into an humble, spiritual, devoted Christian, he must become a new creature. To exchange the form of godliness for the power, proclaims the presence of a Divine agent; but to worship in the name of the very Being on whom the heart had hitherto vented its bitterest execrations; to regard the cross which he had

o viewed as the signal of ignominy and guilt, as

the object of all his affections, the motive of all his actions, the illuminated centre of all his hopes—this implies a change so great that it might almost excuse unbelief (if anything could excuse it) for saying, "If the Lord would open windows in heaven might this thing be." But unbelief itself is silenced by the declaration that opened they shall be. For thus saith the Lord, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring."

2. Associated with this display of omnipotent energy in the conversion of the Jews, there will be the exercise of *unlimited grace in their forgiveness*. We seek not to exaggerate the guilt of the Jews. We believe that the guilt of many an individual Jew is equalled by the guilt of many calling themselves Christians. But when it is remembered that there is a sense in which guilt is transmitted from age to age—that the Jews of the present day are the descendents of those concerning whom God declared, "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet would not my mind be towards this people;" and concerning whom the Saviour solemnly affirmed, "Verily I say unto you, that upon you shall come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth; from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias whom ye slew between the temple and the altar:"—when it is remembered that the Jews of that future day will be the descendents and approvers of those who shouted concerning the Son of God, "Away with him; crucify him. His blood be upon us and upon our children;" and that, by their persevering unbelief, generation after generation have been virtually crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame—when this is remembered, how amazing appears that exercise of mercy which is to cancel so mountainous an accumulation of guilt!

Who has not been melted by that Divine compassion which moved the heart of Jesus when he wept over the guilty city thirsting for his blood; and which led him to save his latest breath to pray for his murderers, "Father, forgive them; for they know not

what they do?" And how amazing the grace which led him as soon as he arose, and while their eyes were yet gleaming with the fire of triumphant revenge, to charge his apostles to hasten and open the charter of redemption first within sight of Calvary! Surely, we might have said, surely if it is ever proclaimed to them, it will not be until it has been first offered to all the Gentile world. But who can calculate the course of his grace? for, behold, he sends his Gospel to Jerusalem first! Who can calculate the course of his grace? for, behold, when his Gospel shall have made the circuit of the world, he will offer it, in all its original plenitude of grace, to the Jews again! He will more than offer it: he will constrain them to accept it. As if his blood had only just been shed, he will convince them that the lapse of time has left its efficacy unimpaired—"that his blood still cleanseth from all sin." As if he had only just begun to reign, and reigned for them alone; he will shower his gifts upon them, "granting repentance unto Israel, and the remission of all their sins." And, oh! when the enlightening Spirit shall have laid open the whole truth to their contemplation—when they shall recognise in him whom their fathers crucified the promised Messiah—when they shall look upon him whom they have pierced; what meltings, what deep relentings of heart shall ensue! "They shall mourn, as one mourneth for an only son, and be in bitterness as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." When they shall see that they owe their forgiveness to that blood which they invoked in guilty imprecations on their own heads; when gathering by faith around his cross they shall remember that they esteemed him "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted;" but shall then see, and shall say, "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed;"—what all-subduing views will they obtain of the prevalence of his intercession, of the unchangeableness and riches of his grace!

3. We are to believe, too, that this change will take place at such *a period in the history of the Jews*, as shall still further redound to the glory of God. There is a fulness of time for it. And as the coming of Christ in the flesh took place at a crisis when the state of the world demonstrated the necessity of his advent, and displayed its grace, so doubtless will be his coming in the conversion of the Jews. Probably they will have reached the last stage of guilty unbelief; or they will be sorely pressed by evils from without; or, abandoning all expectation of ever beholding their Messiah, they will have said, "There is no hope," and will have given themselves up to despair; or all these forms of evil will have combined in one. This we know, that the design of the whole Gospel constitution is that no flesh should glory in his presence; that the inscription on the topstone of the fabric will be, "To the praise of the glory of his grace." And we may rest assured that this important part of the Divine dispensations will harmonize with the whole; that even the time selected for it will say more emphatically than words, "Not for your sakes do I this, O house of Israel, but for my holy name's sake. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake"—from self-derived and sovereign grace—"and will no more remember thy sins."

4. In harmony with the spiritual and Divine character of this event, will be *the means or manner of its accomplishment*. "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." Not indeed that all means will be dispensed with. This would be a departure from the usual course of the Divine Procedure. But those employed shall be of so humble a character, and the success attending them shall so far exceed all human calculation, as to furnish the most glorious exposition of the words, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Ask you the reason for this? "That men may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of

the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it."

5. And then another element of the glory which will redound to God from this spiritual revolution will be found in *the number of the converted.* A few here and there will doubtless be renewed, from time to time, prior to that period. And even then the change may not be universal. But still it will be so general as to satisfy the large prediction that "all Israel shall be saved." "Fear not, saith God, for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather them from the west. I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; every one that is called by my name, whom I have created for my glory." And they shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, to swear allegiance to the cross of Christ. And, oh! if when the "apostles and brethren that were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the Word of God, they glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life;" what joy will seize the Gentile Church when it shall be announced, "Then hath God also to the Jews granted repentance unto life," and they have at length embraced the mighty grant! And if there is joy in heaven among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, who can conceive the rapture which shall thrill the ranks of the seraphim when it shall be there proclaimed, "All Israel is saved!"

V. And this reminds us of the further accession of glory to God from the conversion of the Jews, *resulting from the effects of the event upon others.* For what an unsurpassable proof will it furnish of *the Divinity of the whole scheme of revelation!* As the outpouring of the Spirit upon the Jews on the day of Pentecost was reserved by God for the Crowning proof of the new economy; so the greater effusion of the same Spirit, upon the same people, is reserved to com-

plete the proof of its claims, as it draws towards a close. Sufficient and superabundant as the evidences of its Divinity already are, God is still holding in store a concluding proof which shall eclipse the lustre of all that have gone before. For the conversion of the Jews will exhibit a scene in which every event will be seen to be the providential issue of a train of circumstances laid ages before—every movement, the fulfilment of an ancient prophecy—every occurrence invested with a supernatural aspect; a scene which shall silence the sceptic, and carry the judgment of the inquiring, even though it fail to win their hearts.

What an unsurpassable proof will that event display of *the all-sufficiency of the grace of God!* At the opening of the Christian economy, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus seems to have been designed—indeed, he himself declares, "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." In a similar manner God appears to be reserving the richest display of his saving grace till towards the last. For in the conversion of the Jews he will be seen concentrating his Divine regards on a people who had come to concentrate in themselves the worst elements of rebellion against him; doing this at the very time when they had reached the last stage of hopeless depravity—suspending over them a cloud charged with showers of blessing, at the moment when they might have looked for a cloud showing the very blackness of darkness, and stored with all the materials of wrath; and, amazing wonder! making the death of Christ—the very act which seemed to complete their guilt and to seal their doom—the reason of their forgiveness, the pledge of their complete salvation.

What *an impulse too will be given to the piety of every part of the Christian Church!* "For if the fall of the Jews be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness." The newly converted Jews will

probably exhibit a measure of self-denying zeal for the glory of God, which the Church had come to consider absolutely impracticable. For "he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them." Fired with the emulation of their example, the entire Church shall be seen girding up the loins of its mind, and kindling its lamp at the altar of their piety. New meaning shall be seen in every statement of the Word of God; new value attached to every thing that can advance his glory; new energy be felt in the powers of the world to come. Churches before comparatively dead shall be aroused to newness of life; the great experiment shall be made of ascertaining how much prayer can effect for the conversion of the world; and while the church is, with one voice, crying, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live," the great valley of spiritual death shall exhibit the symptoms of returning life. "For if the casting away of the Jews be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?"

How eminently will this reanimation and increase of the Church tend to *the union of all its parts*. That most ancient of all schisms, between Jew and Gentile, shall then be healed. "For in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek!" the Jew shall have become a Christian; and the Christian an Israelite indeed. Every minor distinction in the Church shall cease; or shall remain only to show the strength of the love which unites all its parts into one. And thus it will be seen that an important step has been gained towards the attainment of the purpose "which God hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ."

And will not—must not all this inconceivably *augment the joy of the Church?* Every ancient interposition of God on behalf of his peculiar people called forth the loftiest flights of sacred poetry. But all these

are deemed inadequate to the celebration of their final recovery. The powers of language are to be taxed as they had never been before. A new song is to be raised more worthy of the greatness of the occasion. "Sing to Jehovah a new song; his praise from the end of the earth." The very site of the ancient city is urged to join in the sacred strain: "Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Even inanimate nature is summoned to share in the joy, and to assist in the praise: "Sing, O ye heavens! for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains; O forest! and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." And amidst this general concert, in which every object shall find a voice and take a part, will the redeemed people themselves be silent? A part of their song is already prepared: "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Indeed, that nothing may be wanting to heighten our conceptions of the sacredness and sublimity of that joy, God himself is represented as anticipating it with delight, and as calling on the universe to share in his Divine exultation; "For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people." In that joy of the Redeemer there will be a depth and a peculiarity which no creature will be able to share. When he shall see of the travail of his soul in their conversion, in how peculiar a sense will he be satisfied! When he who once wept over them bitter tears, shall behold them

prostrate in penitence at his feet;—when he whom they affixed to the accursed tree, shall behold them embracing that cross and exulting, "God forbid that we should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," he will be conscious of a satisfaction which shall fill even his capacity for enjoyment.

Brethren, the glory of the Lord is yet to be revealed. Would you reflect a portion of its radiance? "We beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." No mere outward homage—no ecclesiastical relations, will suffice. Confidence in these was the secret of Israel's fall. And "if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee." Would you promote the glory of God in their recovery? Seek the conversion of all around you. Aim at the recovery of the world. For know, that the progress of the missionary cause hastens the time of Israel's conversion; for "blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved." Would you accelerate the arrival of that blessed day? Then "pray for the peace of Jerusalem." Resolve, "for Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the rigteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." You could not employ means more appropriate to the Divine greatness than to cry daily, "O that the salvation of God were come out of Zion!" The Churches of Christ generally could not unite for a more worthy object than to send up the earnest invocation, "O arm of the Lord, awake, awake!" for thine ancient people. The prayer would be music in the ear of God; and would bring a blessing on those who offered it.

Finally, would you sympathize with and appreciate the glory which shall redound to God from Israel's conversion? Cultivate the humble and adoring spirit of the apostle in relation to it. Your own history exhibits an epitome of the Divine conduct towards Israel. The history of the Jews is but an epitome of the Divine

conduct towards the human race—conduct which is destined to fill the universe with his praise. For what is the nature of that glory which is to accrue to God from their conversion? Is it not the glory of a power which has carried them successfully for ages through every annihilating process that could assail them—the glory of a wisdom which saw the end from the beginning, arranging and foretelling the entire plan—of a benevolence which resisted every kind of provocation to destroy them, pressed into its service every adverse influence, and illustrated every great principle of moral government in a manner directly tending to their highest welfare—of a mercy which after following them nearly through all time, and through all lands, takes them, with all their accumulated guilt and depravity, and erects them into a monument of his saving grace—and the glory of making this dispensation the occasion of further joy to the Church, and of the greatest good to the world? In a word, it will be the glory of Divine all-sufficiency receiving from them at length the homage of creature dependence. And so deep will be their conviction of that dependence, and so vast the views of that all-sufficiency which their history shall afford, that language will fail to describe or record them. And what a subject for contemplation to the minds of the blessed! Once, says the Apostle John, on the opening of the seventh seal, "there was silence in heaven about the space of half-an-hour;"—that was a pause of breathless suspense prior to a tremendous discharge of wrath. But when by this splendid display of mercy, the principalities and powers in heavenly places, shall behold the manifold wisdom of God, surely the silence of wonder will again ensue—a silence during which every face will be veiled, every worshipper prostrate, every heart filled with mental adoration—a silence from which they shall recover only to utter the language of awful delight, "Oh the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God."

Brethren, the tendency of all his dispensations, from

first to last, is essentially the same. And never will they know a pause, till this end be gained. Then man will have found his proper place—the only spot in the universe which becomes him—at the feet of God. Then God will have recovered his proper glory—every rival power will be cast out—the eyes of all will wait upon him—he will be seen by the universe as the centre and stay of a dependent world. Then the design of the great constitution of mercy will be completed—the wise man shall no longer glory in his wisdom, nor the rich in his riches, nor the strong in his strength—the only glory left will be the high glory of dependence on God—everything will be seen to have redounded to the glory of his grace alone. And when all flesh shall thus be seen prostrate before God, what will it be but a prelude to the worship of heaven; what will remain but that the whole should be transferred to the employment of praise above! And as the righteous at length shall go away into everlasting life—as the nations of them that are saved shall "pass through the gates into the city," what more appropriate inscription for the triumphal arch which shall receive them than this, "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things; to him be glory for ever, Amen!" Be this our sentiment in life, in death, and for ever.

PRAYER FOR CHRIST:

A SERMON

ON BEHALF OF THE WESLEYAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY,* DELIVERED AT THE CITY ROAD CHAPEL, LONDON, APRIL 30, 1837.

Prayer also shall be made for him continually. PSALM lxxii. 15.

DAVID, having received certain premonitions of his approaching end, had now resigned the throne of Israel to Solomon his son; the elders and nobles of the land had recognized and had sanctioned the change. Transported with joy at the event, he pours out his soul in prayer for the youthful king and the subject people. But, "behold, a greater than Solomon is here." Wrapt in a divine enthusiasm, the psalmist ascends to a loftier theme, and sings the glory of Messiah, and the magnificence of his future reign.

The text is a prediction, reminding us, in the first place, that *the Bible is distinguished from every other book, professedly divine, by the grandeur, and authority, and tone of its promises, and by the multitude and splendour of its predictions.* Human philosophy may be said to have had three creeds, which might not improperly be distinguished as the creed of the past, of the present, and of the future. The books of Pagan antiquity sung only of the golden age past—of scenes of pastoral simplicity and happiness never to return,

* It may, perhaps, be desirable to inform the reader that on the last sabbath in every successive April, sermons on behalf of Christian Missions are delivered in each of the Wesleyan Methodist chapels in London

while for the future they could say nothing—their burden was despair. Then came the creed of the present. As early antiquity faded from view, man became prepared for the philosophy of Epicurus, for the Optimism, which professes to be satisfied with things as they are, and which, instead of aiming at human improvement, acts on the animal maxim, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." But to this has now generally succeeded the creed of the future, a philosophical belief in the perfectibility of the species, a persuasion that man is at length on the high road to perfection. Now it would be easy to show, that each of these views is only a perversion of some fundamental truth contained in the Bible; but then it will be found, that in the Bible those truths exist in combination, and that every thing, which is there said of the past or of the present, is said expressly for the sake of the future. Thus the contentment with the present, which is inculcated, is not that kind of satisfaction, which hopes and asks for nothing better, but that which springs from a comprehensive view of the divine plans for the renovation of the world, which admires those plans as the wisest and the best, and which thus prepares us to be patient and persevering instruments in the hand of God for their fulfilment. Then again, if the Bible tells of the past, if it sings of a "paradise lost," it is only to prepare us to hear of a better "paradise regained." Yes, the Bible is the true and perfect hope; it builds on the future, and the chorus of all its songs is of a glory yet to come.

But if (it may be said) human philosophy is beginning to calculate on the future, it is at length moving in harmony with the word of God. This, alas! is

and its vicinity. These engagements form a portion of the Missionary services, celebrated at that season of the year. Dr. Harris had delivered his sermon called "The Witnessing Church," at Queen Street, on the preceding Friday, and in conformity with the customary arrangement, that the preacher at Queen Street, on the Friday, should officiate at the City Road chapel on the following Lord's day morning, he preached there the sermon now under the eye of the reader.—Ed.

but very partially true. The church and the world are indeed looking in the same direction, but far different is the result they aim at. And as to the means, on which they chiefly rely, they essentially disagree.

For, secondly, the text reminds us, that *one of the means which the church is to employ for the attainment of the desired result, is prayer.* Now here we are at issue with a skeptical philosophy at the very outset: for, while that philosophy would object to prayer, as inconsistent with the doctrine of the divine unchangeableness, we not only employ it—but rely on it; we even rely on it, in the order of means, as the first; and according to the text we are to employ it continually, never to allow the instrument to pass out of our hands for a moment. We do not say, that prayer has any inherent efficacy to move God. Like every other means, like the food we eat, it derives its efficacy from the sovereign appointment of God. But we do say, that prayer is a condition, on which it seems good to God to put forth his power. We do say, that we can conceive of certain reasons, which may make it agreeable to perfect wisdom to grant that to prayer, which it may not seem agreeable to grant in the absence of prayer. And beyond this, we would remind the objector, that, clearly as the law of the divine unchangeableness may be revealed in the Bible, (and it is only from the Bible that he can have learnt it,) the law that prayer prevails with God is revealed, if possible, more clearly and convincingly still; so that the question will be, will he wisely embrace both those laws, and confidently leave it to God to reconcile them with his own divine consistency—or, if he adopts only one, which will he take, the less obvious law, that which relates to the unfathomable nature of God, or the more plain and simple law, made in love to man, that which includes the sacred duty and the ennobling privilege of prayer? At all events, while he is engaged in a philosophic endeavour to reconcile prayer with his imperfect views of the divine consistency, he will allow *us* to be occupied in admiration of that divine condescen-

sion, which has made it both natural for man to pray, and certain that scriptural prayers shall be crowned with success.

Yes, we would remind him, that, disordered and ruined as our nature is, there are clear indications still, that man was originally made to pray. For even they, who have practically renounced religion, who have lived in the entire neglect of all the various modes by which man approaches and addresses his Maker, even they in the moment of danger or suffering, are generally found to call involuntarily on God for help. The voice of nature at such times *will speak out*, will not allow itself to be smothered and silenced any longer, will cause itself to be heard. Overpowering those prejudices and that irreligion, which had hitherto repressed it, it *will* lift itself up, assert the promises, the power and the goodness of God, and earnestly invoke his favourable interposition.

And we would remind him also, that the prayer of faith invariably succeeds. If his philosophy be sound, he will surely yield to the power of facts; and if facts can convince him, the Bible abounds with undeniable examples of success in prayer. "Every one that asketh receiveth," said Christ, as if he had said, prayer has all the certainty and universality of a law—a law, which can never know an exception—"Every one that asketh receiveth." My brethren, in the whole compass of divinely-appointed means, prayer occupies the highest place, and possesses the mightiest efficacy. And why? It passes by all secondary means, and makes its way straight to God; it puts aside every human hand and goes at once to the arm of God, enters the presence of the eternal, and makes its appearance at his throne. There it enables the suppliant to take hold of the strength of God, and in a sense identifies him with Almighty power. Nor is the efficacy of prayer confined to the suppliant himself. It places him in a new relation to all around him. Prayer is an invisible chain, by which he can draw them towards heaven. It invests him with an

indefinite power over the destiny and happiness of the world at large.

We repeat, then, that while the world is at length looking in the same direction as the church, far different are the objects they aim at, and the principal means which they employ; for while prayer is the last instrument which a skeptical philosophy would employ, we not only employ it but rely on it. And believing what we do of its power with God, we should be inconsistent and guilty, if we did not place it, in the order of means, as first and best. And believing what we do too, of the utter inefficiency of mere human means to renovate the world, and of the power of prayer to secure the omnipotent aid of God, we cannot help thinking that the time has come when the charge of indulging romantic views concerning the future improvement of men should be removed from the church, where it has been so long and so unjustly laid, and be transferred to the world; for while the world is indulging a visionary hope of changing the face of society by mere human instrumentality, the church of God, without abating a jot in its laborious practical efforts, invites the Almighty aid of God, as the only and the all-sufficient source of success.

But not only does the text predict a change, and represent prayer as the means of realizing that change; *it describes that prayer*, thirdly, *as partaking of a specific character—prayer for Christ.* "Prayer also shall be made *for him* continually." But what are the claims of Christ on the prayers of those, who are seeking the happiness of the world? The propriety of praying for the success of another depends entirely on the nature of his undertaking. Now the nature of the Saviour's undertaking is simply this; the world was perishing in ignorance—guilt—and pollution; to recover the knowledge of God, which it had lost, a teacher from heaven was necessary; to expiate its guilt, an adequate atonement must be made; to cleanse it from pollution, a fountain must be "opened for sin and for uncleanness;" to provide either of these requisites the

world was as unable, as it was indisposed, and yet all of them must be provided, or man must everlastingly perish. Filled with compassion for us, though we were his enemies, the Son of God descended from heaven to do every thing for us necessary to our recovery; to become our teacher, he assumed our nature, dwelt amongst us, and spake as never man spake; to expiate our guilt, he died in our stead; and to cleanse us from the pollution of sin, he provided for us the agency of the Divine Spirit. Having made this ample provision for the salvation of mankind, it now remains that the Gospel be made known and be cordially embraced. The Almighty Father has promised, that in reward for the mediation of his well-beloved Son, it *shall* be made known universally, and effectually applied; "Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession;" "he shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." The Saviour desires to enjoy this reward; he declares, that he will draw all men unto him, that he will save the very ends of the earth. And can you conceive of stronger claims on our prayers than these? Did we consult only the temporal welfare of man, the speediest and the most effectual method of promoting even that would be to send them the Gospel. The history of your own mission demonstrates, that nothing lifts them out of a state of barbarism into a state of civilization, so certainly and so completely, as that; it calls them together —gives them a sabbath—throws a shield over their property—blesses them with liberty—and puts them under the protection of government and law; and thus it lays the foundation of all civil improvement and social happiness. But if we design to promote their *spiritual* welfare, the Gospel is *the only means*. Here there can be no competition, no rivalry, no question. The Gospel is the only remedy for a perishing world. Compared with its wisdom, every other system is foolishness; for it is the wisdom of God. Compared with its power to sway the heart, every other system is

weakness; for it is the power of God. Compared with its truth and purity, its majesty and grace, Mahometanism is an imposture and a pollution, modern Judaism is a ceremony and a fable, Paganism a falsehood and a debasement, Deism an unsubstantial shadow, and Atheism a darkness and a horror. "Lord, to whom shall we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Yes, "this is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." This alone can ease the conscience burdened with guilt, cleanse the heart defiled with sin, wipe the tear from the eye of the mourner, and sanctify and conduct the soul to the joys of heaven. But the Gospel can do this; for it is the revelation of one, whose arm is Almighty to save, and whose heart has room for the world.

Such—such, then, are the claims of Christ on the prayers of his people. He is the healer of a diseased and a dying world; and if we have felt his power to save, he claims our prayers that his "saving health may be known among all nations," that the healing influence of the Gospel, like a healthy current of vital air, may sweep over the spiritual sickness of the world, imparting life, and health, and universal happiness. He is the champion of our race, who has espoused our cause against sin, and death and hell. And shall not this be our ardent prayer—"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty, and in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth, and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things?"

And here, in the fourth place, let us mark and admire *the wisdom and grace of the arrangement, which makes it our duty to seek the salvation of the world in this specific manner, by prayers for the prosperity of the reign of Christ.* There is wisdom in the arrangement, which makes missionary success to depend on prayer in general. It brings us to the one spot, and keeps us in our only proper place in the universe, at the feet of God; it tends to annihilate self, amounts to

a confession of our utter dependence, renders appropriate homage to his grace, and thus keeps us in active and constant communication with the fountain of all grace. But by calling us to his footstool, to pray specifically for the reign of Christ, he is giving us an opportunity of avowing afresh our admiration of the scheme of redemption by Christ. To offer up such a prayer is to say in effect, that we ourselves have made proof of the cross of Christ, that we believe there is no hope for the world but through that cross, and that so satisfied are we of its healing efficacy, that, were all the world to feel its power, all the world would be saved, and heaven begin on earth. Now to say this is at once to gratify the love of the Christian and the very heart of God.

By this arrangement, too, the suppliant is afforded the strongest assurance of success in prayer. God is not unfrequently pleased to be found, even of them that sought him not; when, therefore, we do seek him, we may calculate on his hearing us, with the utmost certainty. But when we apply to him on the behalf of the reign of Christ, the certainty of being heard is, if possible, increased. The cause of Christ lies infinitely nearer to his heart, than it does—than it can do to ours. It is the cause, which his own compassion prompted, and his own wisdom devised. It is the cause, with which he has bound up his own glory, on which he has lavished the resources of heaven, and to the success of which he has pledged every perfection of his nature. So that in praying on the behalf of Christ, the believer is taking his stand on the immutable covenant of God; he prays with the force of an Almighty decree; he puts his hand to the propulsion of a cause, which is destined to move forward with the force of Omnipotence.

And by this arrangement, too, every believer, the poorest and the obscurest, is afforded an opportunity of indulging supreme love to Christ, by aiding the advancement of his kingdom. "To them that believe, he is precious," so precious, that in their holiest and

happiest moments, they feel as if every mode of expression, which they at present possess, were inadequate; as if they must wait for the perfection of heaven, and the duration of eternity, before they begin to praise. But few and slender as are the most ample resources, we may now possess, for shewing our sense of obligation to Christ, the great proportion of believers have to deplore, how truly small the gift they can lay on his altar, how little the time which they can give to his service, how circumscribed the influence which their obscurity of station permits them to exert for his glory. Christian, the throne of grace is open, open to you, open to all. Wise and gracious arrangement! Here, you may say, here I can gratify my love to Christ, and give a loose to all the ardour of my soul; poor I may be in the world's account, but here I can pour out at his feet the wealth of my affections; busy I may be in the service of man, but here I can repair in thought and desire to serve him continually; and let my influence with man be as limited as it may, here I can come and have "power with God." While others are engaged in pleading for Christ with men, here I can plead for Christ with God; here I can vie with an apostle; while a Paul is planting, and an Apollos is watering, here I can aid them both by bringing down the increase. Yes, here all may assist, the youngest and the eldest, the poorest and most obscure. To serve the church by munificent gifts and splendid talents is not within the compass of your power, nor can you, perhaps, benefit the world by going forth to proclaim the Gospel: but the tear of the closet, the sigh of sorrow over the guilt of the world, the secret prayer for the reign of Christ—these are within your scope; and these are the elements of missionary success. By these you can touch the spring and source of all motion, and on that depends the final realization of our hopes in the conversion of the heathen to the faith of Christ.

But let us regard *the special object of our prayer in the behalf of Christ.* What are we to pray for?

Our prayers cannot be necessary for him, in the same sense, in which they are necessary for ourselves and for each other; he knows no want, for all things are given into his hand; he is no more the subject of pain, for he is not only ineffably happy in himself, but also the fountain of happiness to all the inhabitants of the heavenly world; he is infinitely removed beyond the reach of danger or of death, for, as the King of Zion, he exercises uncontrolled dominion over the universe. Personally considered, therefore, he is quite independent of our prayers; personally considered, indeed, we are *to* pray to him, rather than *for* him. The prayer, then, that is to be made for him is, not to be made for him personally, but relatively; on account of his relation to other beings—his relation to *us*. In this point of view the object of our prayer for Christ will necessarily vary with the varying state of his cause. A time of error in doctrine or of laxity in discipline—a state of devotion among his servants or of apathy in his service—a season of adversity or of prosperity—calls for a corresponding strain of supplication. But there is one object, which it is always seasonable to implore, and which should always occupy the chief place in our petitions, the great blessing of the present dispensation—the effusion of the Spirit of Christ. Brethren, this is necessary, and this is all that is necessary. Why was it, that the preaching of the apostles was so much more successful, than the preaching of their Lord, though "*he* spake as never man spake?" because when he "ascended up on high and received gifts for men," he poured out the Spirit upon their labours, in the full measure of the Christian dispensasation. Why is it, that the preaching of the present day, though generally speaking it is "the preaching of the cross," is attended with no greater success? Is it because there is not a proportionate concern for the influence of the Spirit; and without that, the preaching of the cross itself will be powerless, for he it is, who must "take of the things of Christ, and show them" efficaciously to the soul. And how long shall

this state of comparative barrenness continue? "Until the Spirit be poured out from on high;" then "the wilderness shall be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest."

Yes, in the scheme of salvation, every instrument and agent has its appointed place, and its appointed order of success. In that arrangement the Spirit is the prime mover of the whole. Hence the first prayer of Christ, on his ascension to heaven, was for the effusion of the Spirit. Till that was poured out from on high, the work of redemption itself, though he had just pronounced it *finished*, stood still; but when it came, everything was put into motion, the world itself vibrated, the gates of hell shook. The first prayer of the church, then should be, for the same object. Why is it, O let there be great searchings of heart—why is it, that the promised effusion of the Spirit is withheld? Why is it, that we are allowed to see only the skirts of his garments, and not permitted to see his face? Why is it, that we enjoy only a few drops of that mighty influence, of which, at this moment, the heavens are full? "We have not, because we ask not," or "because we ask amiss." Individual Christians have not, individual churches have not, the church collectively has not yet duly felt its need of that influence, nor sent up the prayer, which is equal to bring it down. O let that Spirit be sought for, first as a Spirit of prayer. Our prayers would infallibly draw down fresh supplies of his influence, these fresh supplies of his influence would as certainly lead to increased prayer for still larger effusions of his grace; and thus by action and reaction, our prayers would continue enlarging and progressing, and insure increased success to the cause of Christ.

But not only is prayer to be made for the reign of Christ; *the text predicts its continuity or uninterruptedness.* "Prayer also shall be made for him *continually.*" Under the former dispensation, the fire, which burnt upon the golden altar, was never allowed to go out; and the ardent desire of the pious Israelites

for the coming of Christ glowed continually on the altar of their hearts, and never went out. And it is pleasing to reflect, that in the present day there is a sense, in which it is true literally that "prayer is made for him continually." "Last evening," writes a Missionary from China, "last evening, a small party of the disciples of Jesus held a meeting for prayer in my room, on behalf of the heathen around and for the kingdom of Christ throughout the world; in this land of the rising sun, we may probably be considered as beginning that series of prayer-meetings, which are kept up all round the world on the first Monday in the month—a chain of prayer, beginning at the farthest east, and carried round successively, as the sun advances, to the farthest west in the islands of the Pacific Ocean, and thus continued for twenty-four hours monthly." Now it is interesting to pursue this mode of calculation, and to suppose that, wherever there are Christians to pray monthly in public for the kingdom of Christ, there are some to pray daily in private for the same object; and thus we are brought to the delightful conclusion that "prayer is made for him continually"—that, as the aged believer like David, breathes out his last prayer for the glory of his reign, another generation is just beginning to lisp, "Thy kingdom come;" and as the Christians of one province are rising up from their knees before the throne of grace, the Christians of another province are just beginning to take up the language of supplication for Christ; and thus "a chain of prayer, beginning in the farthest east, is carried round with the sun to the farthest west in the Islands of the Pacific," through all the hours of time.

And how much more pleasing does this reflection become, when we add to it the thought that of all the prayers which are thus offered for Christ, making one continued strain of supplication, not one ever has been nor can be lost. Is it true, that every sin committed by his enemies is noticed by a God of unspotted holiness—that every transgression adds something to the

treasuries of his wrath—and that, when the cup of vengeance is full, he pours it forth on the heads of the guilty? As certainly true is it, that every prayer of faith, offered by his people in behalf of his Son, is noticed by a God of infinite love—that every such prayer adds something to the treasuries of his grace—and that, when those treasures have accumulated to a certain amount, he pours them out upon the church and the world. It is as certainly true, that, at the very moment when such a prayer is offered, in that very moment he answers it in his divine intention, though he may wisely delay for a time to answer it really. The suppliant himself may forget his own supplication, or may despair of obtaining an answer; but he is mindful of it, and, however obscure the suppliant, he prizes it. It is prayer for his Son, and, as such, is music in his ear, of which he loses not a single note. It is prayer for the coming of his kingdom, and, as such, he places it among the perfumed supplications already offered by the saints of past generations. He places it among the last aspirations breathed by David, the son of Jesse, and by every ancient worthy—among the mighty prayers, which ascended from the fires of the early martyrs—among the loud cries of those, whose souls are heard from "under the altar"—among the earnest entreaties of the wide creation, which sighs to be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. It is a prayer for the salvation of a world which he loves—and with delight he beheld it flow into a channel, in which a stream of prayer has been for ages flowing and accumulating without a moment's pause, and which shall finally overflow, and pour forth a healing flood of heavenly grace over the whole earth. Ye, then, that love the Lord—"keep not silence;" and in all your entreaties for the kingdom of Christ, let your loudest supplications ascend for the advent of the Spirit. If you would not "grieve the Holy Spirit of God," if you would do homage to the office which he holds in the plan of the world's salvation, if you would

do honour to the mediation of Christ by which the Spirit is given, pray "continually" for Christ by praying continually for his Spirit.

Observe, again, that *prayer for Christ is to be offered conjointly with other things*—"prayer *also*." In all conquered lands—the subjection of the people was marked by two things; their money was stamped with the name of the conqueror, and they were obliged to pray for him in their public worship. In allusion to this fact, it is here said of the conquering Saviour, "To him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; prayer also shall be made for him continually." "The gold of Sheba," a portion of our worldly substance, is to be devoted to him in connexion with our prayers; for to pray in his behalf without accompanying the act with this proof of our sincerity, would be as profane, as to use all other kind of means, except prayer—would be impious. And who has not at least "a cup of cold water" or "two mites" to contribute to his service in connexion with a prayer for his glory?

But we apprehend, that it is far more common for a man to give without praying, than it is for him to pray without contributing. He may give a small pittance for the cause of Christ; and the motive which leads him to do so may stop there, without leading to any thing beyond. But the motive, which leads him to become a suppliant for that cause at a throne of grace, will operate to other effects. The love, which led him there, will lead him, while he is there, to enquire, "Lord, what will thou have me to do?" The zeal for Christ, which led him there, will not there expire; it will there be fanned, and fed, and rise into a flame, in which his property will be cast, as one of the first and most appropriate offerings. Prayer for Christ is one of the last efforts made for him; we are disposed to emulate each other in every thing, rather than in prayer. Hence the importance of urging the duty, since, where this is performed, it evinces a disposition to perform every other.

Brethren, do you contribute a portion of your prop-

erty to the Christian cause, but withhold your supplications from it? Then the church cannot rely on the continuance of your aid, for it does not spring from principle; and God himself resents what you do as an affront offered to his Spirit; he regards every power in the universe as more or less opposed to him, but the power of prayer and the means which prayer has sanctified; he views it as an attempt to do without him, as a hostile endeavour to contravene the great principle of the Gospel, that "not by might," nor money, "nor by power, but by his Spirit" alone, the maladies of the world shall be healed. On the other hand, does the Christian cause press on your heart? Does it? We will defy you to withhold your property from it. Do you sympathize with Christ in "the travail of his soul?" O if that sympathy be sincere, it will turn your whole soul into desire, it will convert your very gifts into prayers. Like the Eastern magi, the act of falling down to adore him, and of pouring out at his feet "gold and frankincense and myrrh," will with you be one and the same act. Do you sincerely pray for the outpouring of the Spirit? In imploring that, you are imploring the spirit of Christian liberality for yourselves, and for the whole church; you are in effect praying that all the powers of nature —all the resources of providence—all the wealth and greatness of the world may be pressed into the service of Christ. For only let "the Spirit be poured out from on high," and it will enlist into his cause every species of instrumentality, which men possess. "The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee; the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee; the multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come, they shall bring gold and increase, and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord." Every thing will be brought, as an expression of love to Christ; and to adorn his triumph, nothing will be deemed too costly for the great occasion. All majesty *shall bow before him*, kings shall wait in his train, the

spoils of earthly grandeur be laid at his feet, and Christ "alone be exalted in the day."

How many and how powerful the motives then, which should induce us to pray for the reign of Christ! A sense of consistency demands it; we call him our King, and shall we not be concerned for the prosperity of his kingdom? A principle of benevolence to man requires it; the success of his cause and human happiness are one; his voice is the proclamation of pardon to the condemned, and of liberty to the captive; his conquests are bloodless, achieved over sin, and error, and the enemies of man; his trophies are the souls of men, redeemed from the bondage of satan and adorned with the beauties of holiness; his career is the march of truth, and righteousness and peace; then who would not pray for his success? A principle of gratitude requires it; he has prayed for *us* "with strong crying and tears," or we should not at this moment be in a condition to pray for ourselves; he gave *himself* for *us*, and in heaven he intercedes for us still. Yes, this is the order, the manifest arrangement of infinite wisdom, that he should intercede for the church, while the church intercedes for the world. In the gracious fulfilment of his office, he prays continually for us; the censer never quits his hand, the incense perpetually rises, his priestly robes are never laid aside. And shall *we* intermit our prayers for him? let a sense of our obligation induce us to pray for him. A regard for our own welfare demands it; we cannot pray for him without drawing down a blessing for ourselves, without enlarging our hearts, standing as in the counsels of God, becoming god-like. And thus every prayer, which ascends from his people on his behalf, like the vapour which the earth sends up into the clouds, returns again in showers of blessing into their own bosom.

"Besides, prayer for the reign of Christ is in harmony with the prevailing spirit of the Gospel constitution. According to that spirit, every thing is made dependent on prayer, and may be effected by it. What

is the sacrifice of Christ himself, but prayer in its most constant, intense, and prevailing form—the prayer of blood? Hence it is said, "He is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." He has turned the whole merit of his sacrifice into prayer. Intercession, in his hands, is a chain fastened to the throne of God, the stay and the support of a sinking world. Yes, even Christ has to pray, and by prayer succeeds. If he would have "the heathen" to be his "for an inheritance," he is directed to ask to that effect; and, accordingly, he does ask: "For Zion's sake," saith he, "I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." And shall he pray for this object alone? He summons the church to join; "Ye that make mention of the Lord," saith he, "keep not silence, and give him no rest." He places them by his side at the altar, puts into their hand a censer filled with incense like his own, and thus seeks to multiply the voice and the power of his own intercession.

But why should it be necessary to enforce motives such as these? The honour which he has put on us, in permitting us to pray for him, might well overwhelm us with amazement. He needs not the supplications of any of his creatures, for he is the object of the Father's unbounded complacency, who hath given all things into his hand; or, if he chose to employ them, he might have engaged the intercession of his holy angels—they have never cast off his authority, as we have done—they have ever counted it their highest honour to engage in his service. How astonishing, then, that he should ask for our supplications in his behalf, that he should permit us to breathe an entreaty for him, that he should place us, whose every breath was pollution, whose every act was an act of rebellion against him, whom he had to create anew before we would take any interest in his service—that he should actually place *us* around the golden altar as priests and interces-

sors for him, that he should (as it were,) change relations with us, placing us in the office of intercessors for him, though the acceptance of our prayers and the salvation of our souls depend entirely on his intercession for us! Well may "prayer be made continually for him;" and well may the Christian cherish a desire, that every moment of his life should be consecrated to an employment so ennobling and so divine.

Brethren, in making *a brief application of this subject*, how painful is it to think, that fidelity requires us to ask, not merely whether you have ever prayed for the cause of Christ, but to go so far back as to ask whether you have ever prayed for yourselves. For if you have not, it is too much to suppose, that you have prayed even for Christ; if you have not prayed to him on your own account, it is not to be expected that you have prayed *for* him on any account. Let me, then, repeat the enquiry, not as a matter of course, but as a matter of infinite moment, whether you have ever yet prayed for yourselves. Have you acquired a habit of resorting daily to the footstool of mercy, in the name of Christ? If you have not, let me remind you, that so far from promoting his cause, you are throwing yourselves as obstacles in the way of its progress. Let me remind you, that, if your conduct were universally imitated, this world would cease to have intercourse with heaven, the footstool of mercy would be quite deserted, the angel having the golden censer would forsake the altar, no more to offer incense there—the destruction of the world would commence. Let me remind you, that the cause of Christ, of which you are now so regardless, is destined to triumph, and the choice is now given you, whether you will share the honour of promoting it, or be dragged as a captive at its wheels. Believe it, my fellow-sinner, that he is now awaiting your application for mercy; he now sends to you this message—that he is waiting for you, that he looks to see you to-day at his footstool. O haste to take refuge at his feet. Pray that he would triumph over your irreligion. Beseech him to make you willing in this "day of his power."

But if you do pray for the reign of Christ, cultivate the habit. Pray for an increase of your own personal piety; and remember that, in so doing, you are in effect praying for him, for you are asking to augment his glory by the acceptance of your homage, to multiply his subjects by adding you to their number, to advance his cause by taking you into his service, and condescending to employ your instrumentality. Pray for the prosperity of the Christian church. But has not a spirit of supplication of late years distinguished the churches of Christ? Only very partially, whereas the prayer wanted is universal; only very feebly, whereas the prayer wanted is "the effectual fervent prayer," which "availeth much;" only by fits, whereas the prayer needed is the continual, unbroken, persevering cry of importunity; only the prayer of party, (effects prove it,) whereas the prayer wanted is the prayer of all "with one accord." Pray, then, for the prosperity of the Christian church.

Do you ask, what should be the special object of supplication? O it wants more spirituality, more distinctness from the world; it wants a higher appreciation of its office, as the instrument of Christ for saving the world; it wants more of the spirit of liberality, union, zeal. But there is one want, which comprehends the whole—the impartation of the Spirit. Let that be secured, and in obtaining that we should obtain the supply of every other want; we should find, that we had come into the possession of the same mind, which was also in Christ—a benevolence, which would yearn over the whole human race—a brotherly love, which would combine with the entire body of Christians, for the conversion of the world—a zeal, which would be constantly devising fresh methods of usefulness, practising self-denial and laying itself out in the service of Christ—and a perseverance, which would never rest, till the whole family of man should be sitting together at the banquet of salvation.

But if all this is to be obtained by prayer, shall we not seek it, and seek it at once? Why should this church,

this congregation delay? Why should we not now, every soul, send up an earnest and united cry for the Spirit of God? And if we did so, who will dare to say that the blessing would not forthwith descend? And who will venture to calculate the extent and consequence of that blessing? Brethren, do we really believe in the efficacy of prayer? Do we? then let us prove it. Let us take, for instance, that forlorn hope of the Missionary war, China, as the scene of a new Christian enterprize; let every step taken be consecrated by prayer; let the heralds be sent to summon it in the name of Christ; let Moses retire to the hill to pray, and (if necessary,) let Joshua and Hur accompany and assist him—in other words, let chosen men be appointed to pray, let others follow them in unbroken succession, and others meet to pray for the chosen intercessors; and let them entreat God continually for that specific object. Let this be done; and could you doubt of success? would you hesitate, supposing you were qualified—would you hesitate to be yourself one of the heralds? Then you are *not* a believer.

Christian brethren, prayer is not only desirable, obligatory, necessary; it is, in a sense becoming inevitable. We read of the church of old being "shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed" —the faith of Christ. The church at present is "shut up unto" prayer—prayer for the Spirit. It must submit to disgrace in heathen lands, or call down help from heaven. It is so completely ensnared by success, that it must sound a retreat, or betake itself to God in unusual prayer? Happy necessity, which shall drive it to this resource! Blessed exigence, which shall bring the whole church on its kness before God. "The time to favour her, yea, the set time," will then have "come." "God, even our own God will bless us." Gazing from his throne upon his church suppliant at his feet, he will say, "Behold she prayeth; let the windows of heaven be opened, and let the blessing be poured out."

By our sense of consistency, then, by our pity for

nations perishing in ignorance and guilt, by our gratitude to Christ, by our own spiritual welfare and by the dignity of our office, let us seek the effusion of the Spirit on the Christian church. And while before God in prayer, let us remember, that, in interceding for the church we are interceding for the world; for it is only through the instrumentality of his people, that he purposes to save the world. Christians! realize in thought the responsibility of your office. Think! you go to God as the earthly representatives of mankind, as intercessors for the world. You pass to the throne of grace, through multitudes—myriads of human beings. Do you not hear them, as you go, imploring a place in your supplications? Do you not see all Africa assembled in your path, urging you to go to God for them, to describe their want, to ask for them the blessings of the reign of Christ? And before you have done pleading for Africa, China comes with its untold myriads, entreating you to intercede for them. And while you are pleading for China, India comes with its tale of lamentation and woe, and entreats you to speak for it; and can you refrain? And when you grow faint, they all combine their entreaties together, that you cry to God for them louder still, that you call in help—more intercessors and more, till all the church be prostrate in prayer. And when you move to quit the throne of grace, they all entreat you not to leave them unrepresented before God. "O if there be a God," they say, "and if prayer can reach him, do not leave us thus, or we perish; our only hope is in the God you worship, the Saviour you proclaim; pray that his saving health may be extended to us." Let Christians realize their office thus, and remember that, in asking for the salvation of the world, they are asking the consummation of the glory of Christ, and then pray till the world is given into their hands. Meantime the whole creation prays; "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now;" it contains within itself principles and powers repressed by the curse of sin, but panting and straining to regain their

freedom, and to fulfil their destiny; and its prayer shall be heard.

But O there is an infinite power slumbering in the arm of God, waiting to be awoke by the prayers of *the church* for the renovation of the world. And the time shall come, when the efficacy of prayer shall be tried on a scale before unknown, when the voice of the church shall incessantly cry, "Awake, awake, O arm of the Lord." And the time shall come, when that prayer shall be heard and those supplications be answered. "Behold," saith he, "I make all things new." At this moment, that new creation stands complete in his prescient view. There are its fields of living green, its trees of life and all its crystal streams; there are "the nations of them that are saved, rejoicing before him." His church prayed for him continually; and now and for ever "daily shall he be praised." "His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed. And blessed be his glorious name for ever. And let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen."

EPISTLE TO THE CHURCH IN SMYRNA:

A SERMON

DELIVERED AT CLAYLAND'S CHAPEL, CLAPHAM ROADS, ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE CHAPEL, LONDON, JUNE 29, 1837.

And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write, these things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive, I know thy works, and tribulation and poverty, (but thou art rich,) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of satan. Fear none of those things, which thou shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death. REVELATIONS ii. 8—11.

THIS, as the superscription informs us, is one of the seven epistles addressed by the Supreme Head of the church, through the medium of his servant John, to the churches in Asia. The structure of this epistle, like that of all the rest, is beautifully compact; and the distribution of its parts natural and comprehensive. After opening with an inscription, which points out the particular church for which it is intended, and the divine authority from whom it is sent, it is found to contain a commendation of whatever in that church was praiseworthy, a rebuke of whatever was reprehensible, and a variety of counsels calculated to arouse the slumbering, to encourage perseverance and to animate hope, and concluding with a call to universal attention and obedience, and a promise to the triumphant Christian of distinguished honour in the world above.

But a similarity of structure is not the only thing these epistles have in common; for, while the blessed Saviour, who indites them, shows that his knowledge of each church is specific—while he is even exquisitely discriminate and minute in his remarks upon each—they are all characterized and pervaded by the same general principles; and the call on every one, to "hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches," makes it evident that these general principles were intended for universal application to the churches of Jesus Christ, in all subsequent ages. We have selected the text, with a view of making it the basis of a few remarks on some of these general principles.

I. And, first, the Saviour would teach us, that *his churches are objects of his supreme regard.*

More than half a century had now elapsed, since he had "ascended up far above all heaven;" and during that period, whether he made himself visible to the martyr Stephen, or called to the persecuting Saul of Tarsus, or graciously deigned any other manifestation—he showed, on each occasion, that the interests of his church were always present to his mind. And now that he once more comes forth, to shut up the vision and complete the canon of Scripture, what is his burden still, but the welfare of his church? Behold him; he has once more emerged from the depths of his everlasting dwelling place; and he is "clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the breast with a golden girdle; his head and his hair are white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes are as a flame of fire; his feet are like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters; in his right hand are seven stars, and out of his mouth goeth a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance is as the sun shining in his strength." Listen to him; he once more breaks the silence of eternity; he calls the world—the universe—to an audience; "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." And what do we hear? The destruction of Jerusalem itself was at

that moment impending. Do we hear a prediction of its ruin? All the governments of the world were at that time in a crisis. Do the divine disclosures we receive relate to their destinies? No; topics like these, though they are all engrossing to the world, are passed over by Him, as comparatively insignificant. Every syllable he utters relates entirely to the welfare of his church, "which he hath purchased with his own blood."

The affairs of the world, indeed, are under his superintendence; but always with an especial view to the prosperity of his church. While he extends his sceptre and dispatches his messengers to every part of the earth, he represents himself as "walking in the midst" of the churches, and holding their "stars in his right hand." The church is his mystical body; and he is present as its vital Head, living through all its members. It is the theatre of his grace, in which he is making experiments of mercy on human hearts, and effecting transformations so amazing that angels look on with astonishment and joy. It is the sacred school, in which he is training up a number of those who were "heirs of wrath," and preparing them to take part in the business and pleasures of heaven. Every thing in his church is sprinkled with his blood and inscribed with his name. He has formed it "for himself," to "show forth his praise." "His eye and his heart are there continually." And the consideration of its supreme value in his account should induce every individual church, and every individual member, in all things to consult his will, to watch and follow his movements, and to rely on his superintendence and all-sufficiency.

II. A second truth implied in the text, is *that Christ possesses the most accurate acquaintance with the state of his churches and of all their individual members.*

Each of these epistles is commenced with the declaration, "*I know thy works;*" and to prove this, the Saviour lays before each church a sketch of its history and its faith. He knows the number of those, who

are in the habit of attending on the ministry of his Gospel in any given place, and discriminates between those who attend with hearts prepared and desirous to profit, and those who are formal, lukewarm and insensible. He distinguishes between those who worship God in the Spirit, and those who only go through the attitudes and signs of devotion. When he sees his professed worshippers at his footstool, "his eyes are as a flame of fire" making inquisition for their hearts, going from bosom to bosom, penetrating through every veil, to learn their sincerity. He follows them from the sanctuary, to see whether their devotion will live till they reach the closet—and into the world, to see if their piety be more than a name. Many of you are known as his professed people, your names are enrolled in his earthly church, and, as such, your conduct is an object of attention to your fellow professors. He also has a book, in which your names are enrolled; but there are inserted, in addition to your names, all the particulars of your moral history—all the religious privileges you have enjoyed—all which you might have enjoyed, but have lost through neglect—all the impressions you have felt, the resolutions you have made, and the discipline by which you have been exercised. From that volume he could read forth at this moment a minute description of your religious character, specifying the particular sins in which you have indulged—the secret causes, which have operated to check the growth of your piety—the manner in which you have "restrained prayer before God," with all the particulars of your devotional habits. "Behold," saith he, "I stand at the door and knock;" and he knows what unholy guests are within, what sins are entertained and regaled in the chambers of your heart, while he is kept standing without and refused admission; or if you have opened and received him, he construes every thought and movement of your heart into a sign of welcome, or a symptom of estrangement and growing indifference.

And oh! were he now to open that "book of remem-

brance" at the page—which contains your name or mine, what may we suppose would be the disclosures he would make? Would not the very first sentence he would utter—"I know *thy works*"—instantly remind us of resolutions broken, of privileges abused and of duties neglected? Would there not flash upon our minds the recollection of many a struggle, in which conscience was vanquished by inclination, the love of ease had overcome a sense of duty, the influence of custom had triumphed over a clear conviction of obligation and right? Would not the first item he might name, in the catalogue of our doings, be of a nature to cover us with confusion, and to prepare us to hear the account closed with the sentence of our condemnation?

Brethren, the day is approaching, when the account will be proclaimed in the hearing of the universe; and the first and the least effect, which the prospect of that day should produce, should be to lead us at once to institute "great searchings of heart."

III. A third inference, derivable from the text, is *that the Saviour despises not the least indications of piety*—that he despises not the least indications of piety, but would have those, who are the subjects of such indications, to cherish most encouraging views of his character.

We infer this from the very fact of his appearance to John in order to deliver the message to his churches. This circumstance alone demonstrated that he had not put off *the Saviour*, that he had not dissolved his relationship to his people, nor divested himself of that tender concern for their welfare; which he so continually evinced during his sojourn upon earth. We infer it from his making this appearance in human nature. His appearance, indeed, as described by John, exhibited that nature invested with attributes of magnificence and glory; but still the nature which he wore was our own. He was "like unto the Son of man," and was clothed in his priestly attire, reminding us that "we *have not an High Priest* which cannot be touched with

the feeling of our infirmities"—that in heaven the golden censer is never out of his hand, the altar of incense never deserted, his priestly attire never laid aside—that he "ever liveth to make intercession" there.

We draw this conclusion also from the view, which he gives of his character to the particular church addressed in the text. It is observable, that, as each church had a character peculiar to itself, so he turned towards each that particular aspect of his own character, which was most essential for it to keep in view. The church of Pergamos, for instance, was overrun with destructive errors, and therefore to that church he writes as "He that hath the sharp sword with two edges"—that weapon of celestial temper which is "quick and powerful" to exterminate error from the soul and heresy from the church. But the church of Smyrna was in a condition to require encouragement, and therefore he turns on it a benignant aspect, reminding them that he is "the first and the last, which was dead and is alive" again. By thus alluding to his death, he sought to awaken in them the recollection of all that he had done to redeem them—of his assuming their nature, expiating their guilt, absorbing and carrying away all their sorrows, and discharging for them all the kind and benignant offices of a brother; and he chose to bring all this before the eye of their mind, in order to make it impossible for them ever to doubt his love. By reminding them, that, though once dead, he is alive again, he would teach them, that his past days and his present life are both devoted to the same object, the salvation of his people—that, so far from neglecting their interests in consequence of his exaltation, he loves them the more, the more he does for them and the more he becomes capable of blessing them—that he would have them to believe, and to act on the belief, that, whatever the dignity to which he is raised, he values that dignity chiefly as it gives him the power of blessing them—and raising them to a joint participation of his glory. By adverting to his divine title as

"the first and the last," he would touch the spring of hope in their nature; for it reminds them, that, as his servants, they may calculate on all his influence in heaven, and on all his omnipotence on earth. It is as if he had said, "Having received a life, which for your redemption I laid down, I have now no other employment but to bring the happiness of my people to full perfection; all the difficult part of the work is over; had there been any doubts concerning my love for man, any objections to my power to save, they should have been made prior to my incarnation, and sufferings and death; the time for making them now is gone by; then was indeed the travail and pang of infinite love, but it is past; I am to be scourged no more—to be buffeted no more—crucified no more—in agonies no more—I die no more—"death has no more dominion over me;" all that is penal is exhausted; the cup of suffering is drained; the ignominy is ended, never, never to be repeated—"it is finished;" all that was toilsome I have done; all that was painful I have borne; nothing now remains, but what is pleasant, god-like, glorious. I am now on my throne, with all things at my disposal, unless you can suppose, therefore, that I could deny myself, abandon my design, forget the very purpose for which I hung on the cross, sacrifice the intention which has always been nearest my heart, you must believe that I who "was dead and am alive" again, live for those for whom I died. Christians! your Lord hath no other employment for his infinite power, but in protecting his people—no other employment for his inexhaustible resources of wisdom and grace, but in blessing and making them happy; and never will he rest, never will he count his work accomplished or his own happiness completed—till he has placed them by his side and crowned them with his glory.

And that he despises not the least indications of piety is evident from the tone of all these addresses to the churches. For while he has to complain in most of them, "I have a few things against thee," he gra-

ciously condescends to enumerate and point out every particular, in which they have proved themselves faithful and sincere. Not more fondly does a parent search, in the features of his infant child, for the least trace of resemblance to himself—not more minutely do men search over whole districts of land, and examine particle by particle, washing the earth, in pursuit of gems or gold, than the Saviour investigates whole churches in quest of the treasures of piety—the features of the renewed mind. And lest there should be but one such partaker of piety in a whole church, he addresses his promise individually to "him that overcometh;" as if he should say, 'Though my church should become so pervaded with worldliness and overrun with error, that only one individual continued faithful and true, he should not escape my notice. I would lead him out from the crowd around him, and honour him in the presence of my Father, and crown him before the eyes of angels.' Some of these churches had almost outlived their piety; what remained of vital godliness he described as "ready to die." Instead, however, of extinguishing "the smoking flax" and expiring flame, he sought to kindle it afresh, by awakening within them emulation and hope—by showing them, that, although their Christian character was reduced to a mere wreck, there were still materials, out of which might be built up a temple of holiness, "a habitation of God through the Spirit."

IV. But then, fourthly, in order that we may not abuse this goodness by resting satisfied with slender piety, the Saviour intimates *that the life of the Christian is a state of warfare, and as such, requiring activity and effort.* He here addresses his people as warriors, speaks of the persevering believer as one "that overcometh," and of heaven as a world of conquerors.

At that time it is true, believers were exposed, not only to foes within, but also to foes without. Many of them could boast, that their persons were covered with the scars of the Christian conflict. They led the van

of the army of the cross; they stormed the very strongest holds of idolatry and sin; they proclaimed the name of their sovereign Lord, "where satan's seat was;" though earth and hell had confederated and drawn out their forces, and encountered them in their path, they advanced with the standard of the cross, and planted it in the very citadel of satan. Would you know the result of their warfare? Their progress from place to place was marked—not indeed with blood, or, if so, with no blood but their own—but with the fall of idol temples, the plantation of Christian churches, the trophies of ransomed human souls, and with the song of the Christian warrior, exulting, "Now thanks be to God, who causeth us to triumph in every place."

Do you admire their heroic devotion—their self-sacrificing piety? It is meant that you should more than admire it—that you should imbibe and imitate. You may not indeed be called to put it in actual practice, to any thing like the extent they did; but the spirit of their piety you *must* have, for the Christian life is a conflict still. The same principle of loyalty and love to Christ you must possess; and from that same principle must you resolutely pass by, without entering all the avenues of sinful pleasure, and close your eyes on the dazzling, but empty illusions, by which the children of this world are enchanted. You must resist temptation, and rise superior to selfish indulgence, and disregard the scoffs and derision, which men may cast against piety; and you must challenge and put to flight whatever would come between you and the gate of heaven. "If any man love his life more than me," said Christ, "he is not worthy of me." The question whether you do or not may never in this world be put to the test; but the importance of possessing the principle of supreme attachment to Christ is precisely the same. If you do not possess that attachment to him, which would enable you to show, if called to the test, that you love him more than life itself, *you* are unworthy of him. If you are desti-

tute of this principle, it will not be necessary to put your sincerity to a very severe test. Any little temptation or little obstacle will be sufficient to move you away from it; the world need not frown and threaten you with persecution—her pleasures will allure, her snares will entangle and ruin you. But possessed by the love of Christ, feeling your obligations to him, looking forward to a crown and a kingdom with him, "none of these things" will "move you;" life itself will be held in entire submission to his pleasure; and, like a Christian soldier, you will be animated, through every change and season of life, with the desire that you may fight the good fight of faith, and be crowned with the smiles and approbation of your God and Saviour.

V. And then, fifthly to secure the persevering fidelity and allegiance of his people, *the Saviour promises them a heavenly reward.*

A promise of this kind is here made to most of his churches; and to each is promised a different reward —by which he would probably remind us, both of his vast and various resources in being able to give to every one a different blessing, and also that he will dispense his gifts discriminately, each being appropriate for the character who receives it.

The gift, which he held before the eyes of the church at Smyrna, was "a crown of life." A crown is the summit of human ambition. To obtain this emblem of royalty, what deeds of daring have men often acheived! what rivers of blood have they shed! what enormous guilt have they incurred! "Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." And do the annals of the church record no deeds of heroism, achieved to obtain that living crown? Who does not instantly think of Paul? Who does not hear him, in imagination, as he stands tranquilly gazing for a moment on the axe and block, then lifting up his eyes to his crown, exclaiming with delight, "I am ready"—"ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand?" This is the language of heroic Christian self-devotion. In the ear of the selfish and

the worldling—it doubtless sounds extravagant and absurd; in the ear of God, and indeed of every intelligent, enlightened being, it is only the language of sobriety and wisdom. It was dictated by no mere momentary impulse of zeal, but was the result of a sober calculation frequently repeated, and of enlightened principle gradually matured. There was a time, when, in common with the world, he regarded life as superlatively valuable; but he now regarded it as comparatively despicable, for he had found an object of unspeakably greater importance.

Others might copy the example of their fellow men; but he had long since risen to the high and holy ambition of copying the example of incarnate perfection, "God manifest in the flesh." Others might waste their precious time in ease, and sloth, and worldly indulgence; but he aspired to enter into the counsels of heaven, to become a co-worker together with God, to lay his hand on the vast machinery of providence, and to mingle in the operations of Almighty love, in renewing and blessing a world of apostate, but immortal beings. Others might think only of enjoying and prolonging their natural life—a life made up of hours and moments; but his eye was fixed on a higher and nobler order of life, his heart was set on an "eternal weight of glory." Others might content themselves with the praise of men, with the good opinion of creatures perishing like themselves; but he aspired to the high distinction of pleasing God—of being received and welcomed into the presence of the Supreme, with the sentence, "Well done good and faithful servant" —and of hearing that sentence echoed and applauded, by all the wise and the blessed in the universe. These were the objects, at which he aimed, and which filled the whole sphere of his vision. Comparatively speaking, he saw nothing else. Ease might offer him indulgence, wealth might display her bribe, pleasure might exhibit her charms—but these had lost their power to tempt; to him they had long since become objects of supreme indifference. Persecution might bring out

and spread in his path a fearful array of scourges, and chains, and axes—all the instruments and apparatus of torture and of death; but he looked at the cross and saw the incarnate Saviour suspended there, and he "armed himself likewise with the same mind;" he looked around, and he saw the assembled church of Christ, urging—for the sake of the Gospel, for the sake of Christ, for the sake of perishing humanity—to go forward; he looked above—and he saw a great "cloud of witnesses," bending with intense attention from their blessed seats, and beyond and above them all, he saw the throne of the Lamb, and him that sat on it, and in his hand a glorious crown of life, and he saw that it was extended towards him; and thus sustained—he could point to all the instruments of torture, and exclaim, "None of these things move me," "I am ready, not only to be bound, but to die for the name of the Lord Jesus." Henceforth there is laid up for me (I have seen it,) "a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day."

But Paul was only one of a "noble army of martyrs." Actuated by the same lofty principles, and fired by the same anticipations of glory, the weak became irresistibly strong, the timid dared to do and to die for Christ. These principles retain their efficacy still; and you profess to be influenced and ruled by them. Are you bringing forth their appropriate fruit? Still does the Saviour continue to unveil and exhibit the prize, which he has promised to holy perseverance, bringing out all the crowns—the regalia of heaven—and suspending them from his throne; and thus suspending and exhibiting them, he reminds you that they are placed there to be won. Oh! reflect that the prize, for which as Christians you are candidates, is a crown—a crown of life. When tempted to relax in your efforts after holiness, it will nerve you afresh to remember that you are on the way to the enjoyment of eternal life—life with God, the life of God himself. All other things at best are mere accessaries to happi-

ness; this life, at which you are aiming, is happiness itself. It is more than existence, more than a bare perpetuity of existence; it is life enriched with the highest possible blessings—life purified, exalted, applied to the loftiest purposes, carried out to its utmost extent of enjoyment—the very "crown of life." And should the contest for such a prize be feebly carried on?

Christians! you are surrounded by "clouds o witnesses." Angels behold you; at the moment of your conversion, there was joy among them, "in the presence of God;" and still they mark every step you take, and tune their harps afresh every time you triumph over sin, and open wider the gates of heaven for your reception every time you put forth a successful effort after holiness. The church beholds you; and sympathizes with you, prays for you and rejoices in your progress. The wicked behold you; and innumerable are the snares, which they lay for your ruin; but "greater is he that is for you, than all they that are against you." God your Saviour beholds you; he is a witness of your course, he commands you to advance, stretches forth his hand to assist you, and while he holds up to view in the radiance of his throne "the prize of your high calling," his voice from heaven proclaims—"Be thou faithful unto death," and this shall be thine—"I will give thee a crown of life."

VI. And then, sixthly, the text suggests *certain incidental methods, by which the individual Christian, or a particular church is to be excited to achieve this warfare, and to obtain this crown.*

Indirectly it calls on every member of every church to which it comes, *to institute a solemn examination of his spiritual history and state;* "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,"—what the Spirit saith to this particular church. "Blow ye the trumpet, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly." As if the trumpets of Sinai had convoked you together here, as if you were one of seven churches, to which Christ had this morning dis-

patched an epistle—suffer the word of exhortation, and lay yourselves open to its searching influence. As if he himself had come down to conduct the solemn process of investigation, invite him to ascend the seat of judgment, and say, "Search us, O God, and see what evil there is in us, and lead us in the way everlasting." Let silence be proclaimed and every heart be laid bare.

To "the angel of the church," to him who is here appointed to watch for souls, the eye of flaming fire is directed first; awful intimation this of ministerial responsibility! Is he prepared to render an account? Though his ministry in this place has been exercised but a few short months, materials for a solemn audit have been accumulating every moment. Has the momentous design of his ministry been fulfilled? Souls are perishing, souls have been perishing during the whole time, and he is here instrumentally to save them; has he "watched for your souls, as one that must give account." Oh! amidst the wide wasting ruin of immortal souls, has he by prayers, by entreaties, by the Spirit of God, saved one? "The sword of the Spirit," that sword without a sheath—has been in his hand; has it been so wielded, that his people have felt its keen, sin-separating, soul-subduing edge? In coming to the pulpit, he has had to pass by the cross; yes, the cross—that wondrous sight, from which angels, since the moment they "desired to look into" it, have never been able to withdraw their admiring regards; that wondrous sight, on which the eternal Father himself is ever gazing with infinite complacency; has he cried, "Behold the Lamb of God?" Can he say to his people, "Before your eyes Jesus Christ has evidently been set forth crucified among you?"

Let the officers and members of the church appear, and bear the scrutiny. As private Christians, are you looking upon character, holy character, as of the highest order of excellence, labouring to attain it, and *daily* renewing the act of your self-dedication to God? As heads of families, is the daily sacrifice presented

on the domstic altar, and are you walking before your households in the fear of the Lord? As members of civil society, is your life exhaling the influence of Christian consistency and excellence? As members of this Christian church, are you sufficiently alive to the dignity of your high vocation? Are you tender of each other's reputation, bearing each other's burdens, praying for each other's welfare, sympathizing, united, as members of the same body? Do you promptly and cordially meet your minister in his designs of usefulness? As Lord of the church, Christ has legislated for your government; are his laws of discipline faithfully administered? When this sacred place was opened, we may suppose that God gave it a name; "My house shall be called a house of prayer;" has it answered to that name? The first prayer, offered by an individual even, engages the notice and approbation of heaven; "behold," it is said, "he prayeth." May we not suppose that the first prayer, which ascends to heaven from a place dedicated to prayer, attracts proportionate regard? 'Behold,' it is said, 'another hour of prayer'—another point of holy assault opened on the kingdom of heaven, by which "the violent will take it by force," another point of friendly communication, opened between earth and heaven, another edifice, whose hallowed influence shall draw to itself the fertilizing clouds of heavenly grace! Brethren, have you realized this expectation? Is the Holy Spirit of God habitually invoked? When this spot was set apart for the erection of a house of God, may we not suppose that from that moment, in angels' eyes it became hallowed—consecrated ground, that they watched its rising walls with holy impatience and delight—that, on the day of its opening, when it first echoed to the sound of redemption, expectation was awakened in all heaven? Brethren, has that expectation been answered? Has good been done? Has the neighbourhood been blessed? Are children educated and taught, visits of mercy made, the influence of your activity beginning to be felt around, other churches

beginning to "glorify God in you," and "your light so shining before men, that they" are beginning to "glorify your Father, which is in heaven?"

In addition to the ministers and members of the church, let those, who attend here only as hearers, submit to friendly interrogation. You have come as the people come, and sat as the people sit; what is the result? Angels attend to witness the effect; has there been joy among them over one instance of repentance? The Bible is here, the book of God; do you sufficiently prize it? In every age this book has been sprinkled with blood; a precious drop has fallen, even on the text, for it speaks of suffering, imprisonment, and violent death. It has been baptized with fire; its prevailing subject is, the sufferings and death of Christ for our redemption; its original propagators and professors endured "deaths oft," in preserving it; it has been transmitted to us through ages of persecution and sorrow; it has been committed to us by a hand, stretched out of the midst of the flames; it has been sent to us from the dungeon, bequeathed to us from the rack; it is the precious legacy of a host of martyred saints. Do you, I repeat, sufficiently prize it? do you believe in it, and press its truths to your hearts? They all expect this from you; they will demand it at your hands when you meet them at the bar of God. Hearers of the Gospel! are you aware of your position? The Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Every time you hear it, you stand as in the focus of all the threatenings, promises, invitations, commands and doctrines of the Bible. They all gather around you, and settle down upon you. Have you not felt them, trembled, wept, believed and obeyed? The Spirit of God is here—here to enlighten dark minds, and renew depraved hearts. Every time you have come here, you have come within the verge and scope of his influence—you have been surrounded by him, as by an all-encompassing enemy. Have you not heard his "still small voice," felt his quickening touch, invoked his regenerating breath to

breathe upon you? Have you ever come with a desire and a prayer to be converted? What! are you still unblest and unsaved?

Brethren, read over the charges exhibited against the seven Asiatic churches, and the commendations pronounced upon them, and then say, were a solemn inquisition such as this to be held over *you*, or to be instituted by you, how many, and which of these charges, or commendations would be applicable to you. Were the Divine Redeemer to dictate an epistle to you, say, would its prevailing tone be more likely to be one of sympathy and approval, or of stern and fearful rebuke.

The text not only summonses you to an examination of your past history and present state—it indirectly charges you *to act on a wise and comprehensive plan for the future.* In engaging that, if you are "faithful unto death, he will give you a crown of life." What is the Saviour but saying, 'Let the sweep and compass of your plans take in eternity, view existence as a whole. Let a grand and comprehensive purpose connect the present moment with a period ten thousand ages hence; aim at the loftiest result, and resolve to wear a crown in heaven.' "I will do," said one in early life—and the resolution was a splendid instance of moral sublimity—"I will do whatever I think to be most for God's glory and my own good on the whole, without any consideration of time, whether now or ever so many myriads of ages hence." "That which is for God's glory and my own good on the whole! what is this, but simply echoing back the language of Christ in the text? It is time doing homage to eternity, faith taking the man up to a distance from earth, and bidding him look down and look back upon this world, reduced to its little dimensions and vanished to a point—it is the soul enjoying a foretaste of future freedom—ascending the throne, asserting its sovereignty, and putting on its promised crown before the time. Go thou, and do likewise. Every thing urges you to do it. Christ is calling you to it; momentous objects are inviting you. Only ascend that mount of

vision, which commands the field of the world; let your survey take in the whole. How vast the multitudes before you! how urgent and how awful their condition! how brief the hour for benefiting them! how mighty the interests pending on that short hour! Wherever your eye falls, it encounters some signal to be active—some object in an imploring or commanding attitude, urging you to come "to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Take such a survey—and we will defy you to be inactive, or to be active only for party. You will dissolve into compassion for the world; you will join hearts with all, who bear the family likeness of Christ; you will feel, that you are an agent for Christ; a dignity which gives you angels for your companions—that you stand related to that infinite circumference of which Christ is the central glory—and that, thus living for the universe, you will be preparing for a crown, and for a place on the throne of Christ your Lord.

Brethren, the messages of Christ to the Asiatic churches required that they should amend at once; for the delivery of those messages was a crisis in their history. The opening of a house of God, or the anniversary of such an event is often a crisis in the existence of a church—a message from Christ to its minister and members—the opening of a new page in its history. Let the first line in that page to-day record your holy determination to live for a crown; and it shall be followed—it shall be countersigned by the promise of God, "From this day will I bless you."

And as a final inducement, the Saviour indirectly reminds us that the Spirit is present—the Holy Spirit is present in the church expressly to reprove and assist, and animate its members. By commanding us to "hear what the Spirit saith," though he himself is the speaker, he would intimate that every thing in the church—every voice—even his own—is in a sense *subordinated* to the Spirit—that even his voice can be *heard with* salutary effect, only as the Spirit repeats it,

and conveys it into the soul. And is it true, that a regard to the Spirit would have saved those churches from decay and death? And is it true, that this divine Spirit is in the church still, that we can obtain his unmeasured influences, and that his aid, if sought for and obtained, could make this church the largest, purest and most flourishing in the land? Yes, it could raise even those seven churches from their long mouldering ruins, and carry their prosperity to a pitch, which even in their primitive state they never saw. Oh! how long shall our state of comparative barrenness continue? "Until the Spirit be poured out from on high;" then "the wilderness will be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest." Yes; in the scheme of salvation, every instrument and agent has its appropriate place, and its appointed order of success. In that arrangement the Spirit is the prime mover of the whole. Hence the first prayer of Christ, on his ascension to heaven, was for the effusion of the Spirit; till that was "poured out from on high," the work of redemption itself, though he had just pronounced it "finished," stood still; but when it came, every thing was put into motion, the world itself vibrated, the very gates of hell shook. The first prayer of the church, then, should be for the same object. Oh! let that Spirit be sought for first as a Spirit of prayer. Our prayers would infallibly draw down fresh supplies of his influence; these fresh supplies of his influence would as certainly lead to increased prayer for still larger effusions of his grace—and thus by action and reaction our prayers would continually enlarge in their progress, and insure increased prosperity to the whole church of Christ.

Brethren, an appeal is about to be made to your Christian liberality. Does the interest of Christ press on your heart? We will defy you to withhold your property from it. Do you sympathize with Christ in "the travail of his soul?" Oh! if that sympathy be sincere, *it will turn* your whole soul into desire, *it will convert your very gifts* into prayers—they will consti-

tute a part of your devotion. Like the eastern Magi, the act of falling down to adore him, and of pouring out at his feet "gold, and frankincense and myrrh" will, with you, be one and the same act. And though your gift may be small compared with your enlarged desires, he, who graciously distinguishes between the will and the means, will say, as he said of the church at Smyrna—will say, as you cast your gift into the treasury, "I know thy poverty, but thou art rich."

Brethren, in praying for the impartation of the Spirit, you are imploring a spirit of Christian liberality—liberality for yourselves, and for the whole church. You are, in effect, praying that all the powers of nature, all the resources of providence, all the wealth and greatness of the world may be pressed into the service of Christ. For only let "the Spirit be poured out from on high," and you enlist into his cause every species of instrumentality, which men can possess. "The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee, the multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come; they shall bring," they—the most unlikely men on the face of the earth—"shall bring gold and incense, and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord." Every thing will be brought as an expression of love to Christ, and to adorn his triumph. His ministers will not have to walk the land, as beggars in his cause. Places like this, dedicated to his adoration and worship, will not struggle year after year for existence, with the weight of a millstone of debt around their neck. Nothing—nothing will be deemed too costly for the great occasion. "All majesty shall bow before him—kings shall wait in his train"—the spoils of earthly grandeur be laid at his feet—and Christ "alone be exalted in that day."

THE HOUSE OF PRAYER:

A SERMON

DELIVERED AT TREVOR CHAPEL, BROMPTON, ON THE RE-OPENING OF THE CHAPEL, AFTER ENLARGEMENT AND REPAIRS, LONDON, AUGUST 27, 1837.

Mine house shall be called a house of prayer for all people.
ISAIAH lvi. 7.

IN the ordinary course of preaching, it is, perhaps, desirable to limit attention to particular truths, and their personal, practical application. Occasions sometimes arise, however, or subjects present themselves, which seem to invite the mind to a loftier range and a more comprehensive view of truth—occasions, when, almost unbidden, the past yields up its treasures—and ages with the men who have made them memorable, dispensations with the miraculous facts and the sublime disclosures which distinguished them, the futurity of time with its distant horizon clothed in flames, and eternity with all the plans of God fulfilled, pass in succession before our eyes. The dedication of a house to the worship and service of God—or the re-opening of such a place—may be regarded as one of those occasions; for it is an event, which springs out of all the past, and which stands related to all the future. The text, too, comes in aid of the occasion, calling up recollections of ancient times and early revelations, and pointing us onward to a day, when, as the grand result of all that God has planned, and Christ has suffered, and the Spirit has effected, the world shall be seen prostrate *before God in* prayer. This we regard, if not as the

principal, as an important doctrine of the text: and this, therefore, we propose, first to illustrate, and, secondly, to apply.

May the Lord of the house be graciously present by his Spirit, to aid our endeavour and to bless his word!

In order to the realization of the glorious scene glanced at in the text, in which the world shall finally be seen prostrate before God in prayer, the first and earliest step necessary was the revelation of *the divine existence.* For "he that cometh to God must believe that he is;" and "how shall they call upon him, of whom they have not heard?" This fact takes us back, in thought, to the time when the knowledge of God was lost from the earth—when the Lord, looking down from heaven to see if there were any, that did understand and seek God, beheld the appalling spectacle of an entire race in apostacy from him, and when, breaking the fearful silence which sin had produced, he called to his wondering creatures, and proclaimed, I AM. This was an era in the moral history of man; for it was, in effect, giving to a world of Atheists a GOD. There the great object of prayer stood revealed before them. Had they known him, the world would have flocked at once in adoration to his feet.

But, secondly, *does he take an interest in the affairs of the world?* for, if not, prayer to him is useless. In answer to the inquiry, Sinai rises to view—Sinai burning with fire, covered with "blackness, and darkness, and tempest," and echoing with "the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words." God is there legislating for sinful man. Can you question his deep interest in human affairs? Listen to his law, as he proclaims it, and mark how much of it relates directly to your welfare. Mark how it denounces a curse against all, who shall neglect the duties they owe to you—how tender it is of your life, denouncing the man who shall even be "angry with you without a cause"—how jealously it guards your property, your reputation, every thing dear to you—how it throws its ample shield over you and all you have—constitutes itself a watchful

guardian of the whole—accumulates into a wall of fire around you—thunders forth, Cursed is every one that attempts to injure him—and requires all the people to say Amen; requires the universe to give a solemn pledge that it will be tender of your welfare. The essence of the whole law is love; and that essence it seeks to instil into human hearts, binding them all together in one great community of love. Was it possible, that man, after that, could question the kind interest of God in human affairs? Apart from the Gospel, nothing in the universe displays the divine benevolence, so much as the giving of the law. Had it been published from Sinai to a holy and obedient race, it would have been received and enshrined with acclamations of delight. But it was published for a race in rebellious confederacy against him—a fact which marks his benevolence more strikingly still; published as a proof of the divine presence among them and of his immediate government over them, and published as a standing protest against human sinfulness, with a view of awakening in the heart a sense of guilt and a loud cry for mercy. Here, then, was God furnishing the world with another great occasion for prayer. Man now not only knew of His existence, but saw that he took a deep interest in human welfare; but as it was evident that we requited that interest with disobedience, nothing could have been more natural and proper, than an earnest importunate, united supplication of the whole race for mercy.

But thirdly, *is the great God accessible?* That he takes a benevolent interest in human affairs is evident; if, however, the terrors of Sinai are not laid aside, if that is a specimen of his usual state, who can venture to approach him? "The Lord," said Solomon—"the Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness:" will he emerge from that cloud, dissipate that gloom and allow man to approach him? The temple on Zion is an answer to that inquiry. "Let the people build me a sanctuary," said God, "that I may dwell among them." This was another stage—a vast ad-

vance in the divine condescension. To show his own sense of its importance, he supplied the model, and selected the spot, and superintended the erection of the building. When completed, the Majesty of heaven came down, and visibly took possession. The very idea that he should do this overwhelmed the mind of Solomon with amazement. "Will God," said he, "in very deed"—is it not merely a figure—will he, in very deed and literally, "dwell with man upon the earth? behold heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him; how much less this house which I have built?" will the divine Omnipresence take up his dwelling here? is not the expectation too great to be realised? No, said God; "this is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it." What amazing condescension is this? He might have paid only a transient visit there; and then we may suppose how greatly would the seasons of his visits have been prized. But how astonishing, that he should speak of it as his rest, his permanent abode! Did not the world repair to it? When it was rumoured abroad that the Lord of heaven had a house upon earth, did not the guilty race come to cast themselves at his feet, and sue for mercy? That was the object of his coming.

But will he, it might be asked in the next place—*will he pardon?* His house may be filled with thunderbolts of justice and with ministers of destruction, for man has deserved it; accessible he may be, but is he propitious? Approach, and read the inscription over its gates—the "house of prayer." Then there is hope for the penitent, there is pardon for the guilty. Let us enter, and ascertain. On crossing the threshold and looking around, we find that it is distributed into three parts. We find ourselves at first in the court of the temple; here the principal objects are a great altar of sacrifice, and a laver—in which the sacrifices are washed; What mean that cleansing water and that bleeding lamb? They say, as plainly as they can, that, "that without shedding of blood, there is no remission" of sins, and that the victim, whose blood

is shed, must be washed—must be spotless. We advance, and find ourselves in the second part—the holy place; here the principal objects are a golden candlestick, a table of shewbread, and an altar of incense; and what mean these objects? They denote, that the sacrifice in the outer court is accepted—that God is propitiated, that he is waiting to illuminate and anoint his worshipers with the Spirit, to feast their souls on "living bread," to accept their praises as grateful incense. But what means that mysterious veil, which conceals the third part of the temple—the holiest of all? It denotes, that sinful man can fully approach a Holy God only through a divine Mediator, and that that Mediator is not yet come. But we know what is within; there stands the ark of the covenant, and the mercy-seat resting upon it, denoting mercy resting on faithfulness—and there are the cherubims overshadowing the mercy-seat, intimating the reverence with which even mercy itself should be sought, and the profound mystery which it involves. But what means that mass of dazzling light above? It is the symbol of the divine presence; God is there. And why dwells he there? That men may come and fall down before him, and that he may commune with them from off the mercy-seat. Why dwells he there? Do you not see through his gracious design? He makes it his rest, that men may come to him and make it their rest. Numbers, through successive ages, availed themselves of his grace. There penitence often smote on its breast, till its tears were wiped away; there conscious guilt lost its tormenting sting, and first found peace; fear lifted up its eye and smiled; faith looked up in the face of God, and appealed to the heart of God, as it stood with its hand on the head of the victim; there prophets, and kings, and the righteous men of many generations bowed down in prayer, and found acceptance with God.

But everything there, gracious as it was, calculated as it was to bring the people in humble prostration before God, existed only in type and promise; it may be

asked, therefore, in the next place, have those types been accomplished? That temple is gone, its splendours have vanished, its most sacred things have disappeared, the whole economy is abolished, the very nation itself scattered to the winds of heaven; are those promises fulfilled? Oh! what stupendous scenes arise, and present themselves in reply. "The fulness of time" arrives, and behold God sending forth his Son. All heaven is wondering and rejoicing, for in his person divinity and humanity have at length met; before, they had been only approaching each other—but they have met, coalesced and become one; he has taken our nature and has made A TEMPLE of that; God is "manifest in the flesh." Calvary appears; there, as our substitute, he is making an infinite compensation for our demerit, washing out the guilt of the world with his blood, dying, that God may never more be more angry with man—that man may never deny or grieve the love of God. The day of Pentecost arrives; behold, in its scenes, a proof that our Advocate has entered on his office of intercession above, and that his sacrificial plea prevails, for lo! the Spirit is "poured out from on high," and thousands bow in meek subjection to his power, constituting at once the means and the pledge that his house shall become "a house of prayer for all people."

Is it, then, still asked, if the ancient promises have been fulfilled? Let the tears of the sinner, the joy of the saint, the success of the gospel in every subsequent age—bear witness. Behold, in this house of prayer, and in every similar house of prayer—an adequate reply. Do you look around and ask for *the altar of sacrifice?* "*We* have an altar," says the apostle; though invisible to the eye of sense, the eye of faith beholds it; and on that altar there is a victim; will you not reverently approach and look upon him? Mark the majesty and meekness, the dignity and compassion of his looks; it is Christ crucified; it is the Lamb of God, "taking away the sin of the world;" "the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all;" is not that

superior to the Jewish sacrifices? He is spotless; his "blood cleanseth from all sin;" "by his one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;" will you not draw near, and nearer still, and lay your hand, by faith, on the head of this atoning sacrifice? "God hath set him forth, as a propitiation for sin through faith in his blood." Do you look around here for *the ark of the covenant?* The ark *we* have not, but the covenant we have. What means this sacred book?

> "All that the ark did once contain,
> Could no such grace afford."

"This is the new covenant," said Christ, "the new covenant in my blood," the covenant of life. Every page of it proclaims, "Hear, and your soul shall live." Do you look around for the mysterious *veil*, and for the *high priest* that enters within it? *We* know of no veil to conceal the mercy-seat; we have access into the holiest of all; the only veil we know of is that which separates earth from heaven. And as to our high priest, he has passed within that veil; "he is gone into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us;" our "Advocate with the Father" is "Jesus Christ the righteous;" he "ever liveth to make intercession for us."

Every thing valuable in the Jewish economy has found accomplishment, stability and perfection; and the design of it all is to make his house a house of prayer, a place of friendly meeting between God and man. This was the great object, at which he aimed when he dwelt amongst us. Hence the attractions, with which he invested the throne of grace, adorning it with precious gifts, on which he inscribed—"Ask, and ye shall receive"—describing him, that sits on the throne, as our Father, willing to receive us as his children—assuring us that we go there invited and expected, as his friends—placing in our hands a censer, filled with the incense of his own merit, to make our acceptance secure. And still his heart is set on effecting an interview between God and man. Hence the

specific design, for which he has instituted the ministry of the gospel, is to beseech men to be reconciled to God, to come and cast themselves down at his feet; and hence the office of intercession, which he fills in heaven—never quitting his station, never remitting its duties for a moment, but watching and encouraging the sinner, as he takes the first step to the mercy-seat, by declaring, "I will pray the Father for you;" for well he knows, that, when brought in penitence to the footstool of mercy, our forgiveness is certain, and the end of the gospel gained.

But, again, admitting that God is thus accessible and gracious, *is he thus accessible and gracious to all?* Ask if the light of day is free for all that see, ask if the air of heaven is free for all that breathe, but ask not if the throne of mercy be open to all that need salvation. "My house," saith he, "shall be called a house of prayer for all people." And remember, he said this under the local economy of the Jews; is the gospel church less open and free, than the Jewish temple? Its gates are never to be shut night nor day; its blessings are to be offered "without money and without price;" its ministers are dispatched into all lands with the command—"Preach the gospel to every creature" under heaven. 'Proclaim, that I am now on my throne, giving audience to the world; say to them, All things are mine, come and share them; I possess them for your enjoyment and use, come and let me confer them upon you; all the riches and resources of heaven are mine, and you may be made the happy recipients; come, and I will bless you with eternal life; "whosoever will, let him come;" I cast out none; "my house shall be called a house of prayer for all people."'

And *is there ground to conclude that this sublime result shall be realized?* "The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." "I have sworn myself; the word hath gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear." By what particular

changes in the present kind of instrumentality, at what precise period, or to what exact point of perfection, the result may be realized, we cannot say, and are not anxious to know; sufficient is it for us to know, that the time *shall come*, when the world shall be seen prostrate before God in prayer, and then will it be clearly perceived that this has been brought to pass as the result of all that God has planned, and Christ has suffered, and the Spirit has effected. The very mention of his name then will be sufficient to bring the world into a posture of adoration; they will come before him, hungering for his blessings, languishing for his Spirit, coveting—craving the gifts of his grace. Is his throne of mercy open to all? Is his house "a house of prayer for all people?" "O thou, that hearest prayer, to thee *shall all flesh come.*" They shall not be satisfied to enjoy thee alone; they shall go out, and, with a friendly violence, compel others to come in and share thy favours with them. "It shall come to pass, that there shall come people and the inhabitants of many cities, and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go quickly to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of hosts, I will go also; yea, many people and strong nations shall come, to seek the Lord and to pray before him." Churches shall come to adore him, cities to consult him, nations to surrender to him, all the kindreds of the earth to fall down before him. They shall not be content to praise him alone; they shall feel as if they wanted help—the help of the world—to raise a song adequate to his praise, and a prayer equal to the ardour of their desire. "And it shall come to pass, that, from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord of hosts." Then man will have found his only proper place—will have returned to the only spot in the universe, which becomes him—at the feet of God; and having found his proper place, his ultimate end, there will be rest, confessing himself nothing that God may be all—going out of himself, and losing

himself in God—finding his heaven in the smile of God. Then God will have recovered his proper glory; every idol will be abolished, every rival power cast out; "the eyes of all" will "wait upon him;" all flesh will be hanging upon him, staying themselves upon him; he will be seen by the universe as the centre of a lapsing creation—the support and the stay of a sinking world. Then the design of the whole gospel constitution will be completed—"that no flesh should glory in his presence;" everything will have redounded to the glory of his grace. And when all flesh shall thus be seen prostrate before God in prayer, what will it be, but the prelude to the worship of heaven? What will remain, but that the whole should be transferred to the employment of praise above? Infinite love, ascending the throne and putting on the crown, shall sit down and enjoy an eternal sabbath of love, while the myriads of the redeemed and glorified, casting their crowns at his feet, shall ascribe their happiness to him—and *the jubilee of eternity* begin.

Brethren, *to this point everything* in the universe—everything in the mediatorial government of Christ—*is tending*, with the directness and force of a law. To this end, therefore, every event in his church, every movement of his people should be intentionally subordinate. Viewed apart from this ultimate design, the most magnificent projects of man become puerile; viewed in connection with it, things in themselves of very slender account swell into infinite importance. It hallows whatever it touches—ennobles whatever it employs. Brethren, such is the fact in relation to this and similar Christian edifices. Regarded merely as a structure, raised or re-opened for the honour of a religious denomination, it is little better, little more, than a few particles of fabricated dust; but regarded as pointing to the great end, of which we are speaking, its foundations rest on the deep-laid purposes of God, its top-stone touches the throne of God, its dimensions on all sides stretch away into infinity, it is built into and forms a part of the vast system of means, by

which God is working and which fills the universe. Not more certainly is it connected, as a material fabric, with the universal laws of gravitation, and as such exerting a physical influence through all space, than it stands connected, as a moral means, with the universal government of God. There is a sense, in which even the temple at Jerusalem still stands. Though, in a literal respect, not one stone of that sacred pile remains upon another—in the moral influence, which it exerts over the church of God, it still lifts up its sacred head, its fires still burn, its victims still bleed, its days of atonement still return; we have just seen them this morning; we shall see them in eternity. Brethren, there is a sense, in which all the great events and solemn transactions, related in the Bible, may be regarded as having taken place within these walls. Here they will come, (as they often have already, in the ministry of the Gospel,) and occur again. Here Eden will bloom, and man will fall. Here God will speak, and Sinai will burn. Here prophets will repeat their sacred strain, and priests present their offerings. Here, "before *your* eyes, Jesus Christ" will "evidently be set forth crucified among you;" and here again will be heard the "rushing mighty wind" and the "cloven tongues" of the day of Pentecost. By linking on this place to the great machinery of Providence, all the influences of the past come and gather around it, and settle down upon it, while, for the future, all heaven is awake with expectation; for as a house of God, a page is opened for it in the book of his remembrance. As a house of prayer, it takes its stand among the means, by which God is reducing and restoring all things to himself; it forms a part of that mighty stream of tendency, by which all things and all men are to be borne on into the presence of God, there to fall prostrate before him, and acknowledge him all in all.

The question will be entertained, then, by every Christian mind—*How may this sacred place be made effectually, more effectually than ever, to subserve this*

great end? The text supplies the answer—by making it literally "a house of prayer." Every power in the universe is regarded by God as more or less opposed to him, except the power of prayer and the means by which prayer has sanctified. Every human habitation, in which God is not worshipped, is a fortress raised in hostility to him, and the family which inhabits it is in arms against him. On the other hand, wherever prayer is made, and in the exact proportion in which it is made, there he beholds a spot reclaimed from the powers of darkness, and subjects swearing allegiance to his throne. My friends, the world itself was intended to be "a house of prayer." Every spot in it was meant to be sacred to the worship of God; all its air should have been incense, and all its sounds adoration and praise. That purpose sin attempted to defeat. But oh! a higher purpose still only waited till the attempt should be made. From that moment the plan of grace has been unfolding, which concentrates within itself all the interest of the world's history—all that is eventful in the universe of God. And when the consummation of all things shall arrive, what will this world be thought of, think you, but as it has furnished a stage for the unfolding of that plan, and as it was graciously reclaimed, in consequence, from being a house of sin, again converted into a house of prayer, and thus restored to its original design? Let man record its history, indeed, and he would dwell chiefly on topics of war and peace, of pestilence and famine, the changes of thrones and the revolutions of empires; but, as written by the finger of God, these things shall be noticed only as they subserved or opposed his final purpose, while the history of the world, as far as man's instrumentality tended to promote that purpose, shall be chiefly a history of prayer. Preaching itself—benevolent activity itself—except so far as it is associated with devotion—shall be passed over to record the triumphs of prayer. Many a Christian, who once filled the public eye with his active deeds and his burning zeal, shall be compara-

tively unnoticed; and the man of prayer—the wrestler with God, shall be drawn out from his closet obscurity, and proclaimed in his stead, and it shall appear, that while the one was only moving earth, the other was moving heaven.

Are we asked for a proof of this? Brethren, a great portion of the world's history *is* written—written by the finger of God. The Bible is God's summary of the history of the world, down to the close of the first century of the present era. What are the deeds—what is the kind of human instrumentality—which he has deemed most worthy of record? Oh! if I did not believe you to be sufficiently acquainted with that already, I would say, paint them on the walls of this sacred place; let those spaces, now left in unadorned simplicity, be occupied with the principal scenes out of God's history of man's instrumentality, and they would soon be peopled with suppliants in all the postures of devotion, crowded with the various forms and attitudes of prayer. In one place, Abraham would appear, interceding for Sodom—and Omnipotence waiting till he had done, the tempest of descending fire suspended in the air, suspended and ready to be blown away by the breath of prayer. In another, Moses would appear, holding back the arm of God, while Omnipotence is saying, as if hampered and embarrassed, LET ME ALONE—"Let me alone, that I may destroy them." In one compartment should stand the temple, with the scene of dedication—a nation at prayer—and clouds of massive glory filling the house; and in another, the same temple, with its high priest occupied in the office of two-fold intercession—prayer with the voice—and prayer by sacrifice, the prayer of blood—thus justifying the description given of it in the text, "a house of prayer." Did Jesus pray? Oh! in a sense more than figurative, he saved the world by prayer. Pourtray a mountain top, and Jesus on it, prostrate, alone, wet with the dews of night, praying to God "with strong crying and tears;" and next, a garden—Gethsemane—and Jesus there, praying in an agony, which

baptizes him in his own blood; and next the "place called Calvary," for "there they crucified him," and Jesus died, offering that great sacrificial prayer, which still pleads, still fills the ear of God, and for the sake of which alone all other prayers are heard. Can the "cloven tongues of fire" be pourtrayed? forget not to represent the apostles, on whom they rest, assembled in prayer. Elsewhere let an angel be seen, despatched from the divine presence to liberate Peter from prison; but forget not to represent the disciples, in a neighbouring house, in prayer. But oh! there is a vision no human eye but one hath seen, which sums up all—"an angel standing at the altar, having a golden censer, and there is given him much incense, that he may offer it with"—mark—"that he may offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which is before the throne; and the smoke of the incense," blending "with the prayers of the saints, ascends up before God out of the angel's hand." Yes; here is the summing up of man's instrumentality. Of all the various ways, in which he employs himself here, look into that censer, and mark which of them it is that reaches heaven. When the clamours of a prayerless zeal have subsided, and the undevout deeds, which have dazzled and astonished men, have spent their force, mark what is left in the censer; only that, which partakes of the nature of prayer. This is all that lives to reach the skies, all that heaven receives from earth, all that is ever permitted to ascend before God. Oh! brethren, would you have this place to be named at last in God's history of the world? Let it be distinguished now as a house of prayer. For when that history shall at last be summed up, nothing which has not been in that censer, will be named, except to be condemned; and nothing now will ever find a place in that censer, but that which ascends on the breath of prayer.

Here, then, you are to come *in the spirit of prayer.* The great idea of God, as the object of prayer, is to mingle with all your thoughts of the place, hallowing,

ennobling, and lifting it into sacred importance. The very presence of a church or a chapel is to be viewed as a perpetual protest against all prayerlessness and irreligion. By it, God is to be regarded as repeating his original announcement, and saying to all the passers by, 'I AM; come, and fall down, and worship me.' And by it, you are to be regarded as saying to them, "Oh! come, let us worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker." Remembering that you come to obtain an audience of the great King, you will be punctual and regular in your attendance; you will see to it, that prayer—that "praise waiteth for God in Zion;" he will not have to wait for it. You will allow no affairs but his to be transacted here; it was the violation of this understood compact with God, which led our Lord to say of the ancient temple, "It is written, my house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." As if you had just heard of his existence for the first time, you will come, labouring to realize to your minds the idea of his glorious presence, to feel that he has entered and is here. As if his providence had only just now taken the affairs of men under its superintendence, or as if you had only now heard of it for the first time, you will come, full of confidence and of hope. For what, if all the princes and philosophers, and philanthropists on earth were daily to meet in solemn council on nothing but *your* affairs, and were to place all their resources at your disposal—what would that be, compared with the glorious truth that God has taken your affairs into *his* hands, and that here he is always present, expressly to receive you? As if the great facts of the Gospel history had only just occurred—as if the clouds of glory, which conveyed the ascending Saviour to heaven, had hardly yet disappeared—you will come, full of expectation and joy. You will anticipate fresh disclosures of his grace, royal favours from his hand; and the more you expect, the more will you honour him. Adore his condescension, then, and expect his blessing. Let your affections go forth to meet him,

and your heart be enlarged to receive him. Regard it as "none other than the house of God;" and he will see to it, that it shall prove "the gate of heaven."

Again, here every thing is to be done *with the view of leading to prayer.* As we have been proceeding with our remarks, the question may have arisen in some minds, What! is our piety to take no other form, than that of prayer? is it to show itself in no other way, than by prayer? Such a question, however, could be entertained only where there existed a misapprehension of the nature of prayer, and of the way in which prayer, like an all-pervading element, penetrates and blends with all the various methods, in which piety works. Confine yourselves to mere acts of devotion! no, not even in the house of prayer itself. Only see to it, that whatever you do, you do it with an ultimate view to prayer.

If you preach the Gospel, for instance, you are to bear in mind, that that is the most successful preaching, which brings men prostrate before God for mercy, that this is the very end of the Gospel ministry: and, the more vividly you can "set forth Jesus crucified among them," the more effectually this end will be answered. Yes, let this place, as every other house of prayer—let this place have a Calvary in the midst of it, and on that Calvary let there be a cross, and on that cross a bleeding Saviour, and on that sight—that spectacle of love, let the eyes of the people be kept perpetually fixed. As preachers of the Gospel, our great distinction is that we are the ministers of the cross; we have to wait on the cross, to walk around the cross, to point out to the people the wonder's of the cross. Have we any pathos? It should be kept for telling them of the cross. Have we any affection for their souls? It should gush forth, when we are pointing them to the cross. Have we any tears for them? Where shall we shed them, but when we have led our people to the cross—when we are there saying to the sinner, "Behold him," look upon him, "he was wounded for your transgressions," "bruised for

your iniquities," "the chastisement of your peace was upon him, that with his stripes you might be healed;" draw near to him; it is of you, that he is thinking; that blood is to wash away your sins; that life, which he is pouring out, is the ransom he is giving for your soul; draw nearer still—look into his heart; read the names, which are written there; your name is among them. And while we are thus entreating the sinner, does he relent? does he "look upon him whom he has pierced, and mourn?" does he "smite upon his breast, crying, God be merciful to me a sinner?" Then the end of the ministry is answered. "Behold, he prayeth."

But besides the preaching of the gospel, all the other ordinances of God's house are to be administered likewise; and in addition to these, children are to be collected and taught on the Sabbath, pecuniary offerings are to be cast into the Christian treasury, the Bible is to be distributed, visits of mercy are to be paid in the neighbourhood around; it is to be God's house for doing God's work. But however various the agencies and extensive the operations, which are organized and kept in activity, the tendency of the whole must be to bring men to God in prayer. What will it avail, if it stops short of this—if it does not contribute to this? The tendency of all that God does, is to lead to this; and if you would act in harmony with his design, the direction of all your movements for others must be towards the presence of God; the language of all you do for them must be, We cannot be satisfied, till we see you reconciled to God, prostrate before him in prayer.

Here, too, the salvation of the world, and whatever may be instrumentally necessary to that salvation—should be made the subject of prayer. "My house," saith God, "shall be called a house of prayer for all people." But as all will not—cannot—here pray for themselves, your obvious duty is to come and pray for them. Parents, pray for your children; and children, pray for your parents. Let all the various relations of life come to pray for each other. Pray for the neigh-

bourhood around: there is a sense in which it is committed to your care—in which God is saying to you, as to his people of old, "I will make you, and the places round about my hill, a blessing." "There shall be showers of blessing." Pray to be made the cloud, from which the showers descend, the channel through which they flow.

Pray for the prosperity of the whole Christian church. The great Intercessor above prays not for a party; the names of all the tribes are graven on his breastplate; and does he not love that prayer the most, which most nearly resembles his own? Pray, then, for the prosperity of the whole Christian church. Do you ask, what should be the special object of supplication? Oh! it wants more spirituality and distinctness from the world; it wants a higher appreciation of its office, as the instrument of Christ for saving the world; it wants more of the spirit of liberality to sacrifice for Christ; of union—of oneness, in accordance with the prayer of Christ; of zeal which shall burn for the universal triumph of Christ. But one want there is, which comprehends the whole—the impartation of the Spirit of Christ. Could a convocation be held of all the churches upon earth, the object of their one united cry should be for that promised Spirit. Let that be secured, and in obtaining that we obtain the supply of every other want; we find, that we had acquired the same mind, which was also in Christ—a benevolence, which would yearn over the whole human race—a brotherly love, which would combine with the whole body of Christians, for the conversion of the world—a zeal, which would be ever devising fresh methods of usefulness, practising self-denial and laying itself out in the service of Christ—and a perseverance which would never rest, till the whole family of man should be seated together at the banquet of salvation.

And in coming here to implore the effusion of the Spirit on the church, remember that you are in effect interceding for the world: for it is through the instru-

mentality of his people, that he purposes to save the world. Christians! realise in thought the dignity of your office. You go to God as the earthly representatives of mankind, as intercessors for the world. You pass to the throne of grace, through multitudes—myriads of human beings. Do you not hear them, as you go, imploring a place in your supplications? Do you not see all Africa assembled in your path, urging you to go to God for them, to describe their wants, to ask for the blessings of the reign of Christ for them? And before you have done pleading for Africa, China comes with its untold myriads entreating you to intercede for them. And while yet you are pleading for China, India comes with its tale of lamentation and woe, and entreats you to speak for it; and can you refrain? And when you grow faint, they all combine their entreaties that you cry to God for them louder still; that you call in help—more intercessors and more still, till all the church be prostrate in prayer. And when you move to quit the throne of grace, they all in effect entreat you not to leave them unrepresented before God. 'Oh! if there be a God,' they say, 'and if prayer can reach him, do not leave us thus, or we perish: our only hope is in the God you worship, the Saviour you proclaim; pray that the blessings of his grace may speedily be extended to us.' Brethren, realise your office thus. Let this be "a house of prayer for all people;" and you will be hastening the day, when the world shall be given into the hands of the church, and the whole shall cast themselves at the feet of Christ.

Here then, in this place, (and oh! that it might be so from this day!) let a period of enlargedness commence, in your views of the kingdom of Christ, and in your endeavours to realise them. Imagine that a new page is opened to-day in your history; let it prove a fairer page, than any in the past. Review that past; ascertain in what respects it admits of improvement—whether in the regularity of your attendance on the means of grace—in the attention, serious-

ness and self-application, with which you hear the word of God—in the amount of your pecuniary contributions to his cause—in your personal activity in his service—or in the fervour and comprehensiveness of your prayers: and in whichever it may be, ask God to record to-day, in the book of his remembrance, a holy resolution of instant amendment. Especially see whether you ought not to take a loftier stand than ever, in relation to the great interests of the kingdom of Christ. Has he made you partakers of his grace? Then he has taken you (and often takes you still,) to a height, which commands a view of eternity, and bids you take a comprehensive view of existence—to regard it as a whole—to live for eternity; and having taught you this, as essential to your own personal happiness, he next takes you to another mount of vision, which commands a view of all mankind, and he bids you to pray for them all—to open your heart and embrace them all—to live for the universe. Let this house be to you that mount of vision. The present is a day of more extended views, than the past—a day of greater designs and of more generous endeavours; let this be a house for the day. My young friends—you whose eye is kindling at these designs, and whose hearts beat high at those endeavours—be you, as men of God, men of and for the day. Louder voices urge you on, than your predecessors have ever heard; and more splendid achievements await your advance. Take enlarged and comprehensive views of duty; devise liberal things; design for the universe and for eternity. The Lord of the church himself is your leader; angels witness the scene; and the world is waiting to be blessed by your instrumentality.

But when shall you begin? Let the re-opening of this place, signalized as it is in heaven, be signalized here by your beginning now. The opening of the temple was distinguished by the prodigious number of the sacrifices offered, and by the solemnity, spirituality and comprehensiveness of the dedication prayer; shall

not the re-opening of this place be similarly distinguished? Some of you, I know, have already, last year, contributed—contributed of your property liberally; "well done, good and faithful servants;" but oh! let us hear, as we do of the churches in Macedonia, not only of your liberality, but of the continuance, the habit, "the riches" of your liberality. Give, as God gives. Give under the expanding and exhilarating recollection, that you are giving in a house, where you come to ask God to give you heaven and eternal life—that you are giving towards "a house of prayer for all people," for all people for whom God hath given his Son, his only-begotten Son. Give under these impressions; and you will so give, that in eternity you will bless God for disposing you to act so much like himself.

Prayers, too, have been offered—solemn prayers—comprehensive prayers—prayers, which the angel having the censer hath presented, and which he, who sits on the throne, hath heard. But has each one present joined? Let inquiry be made—have all prayed? What! is there one present, whose heart has not united in the general supplication—one, who has never yet begun to pray—who, in the very house of prayer, while every one around him was engaged in prayer, has yet kept aloof from the throne of mercy? Is he not pointed out, at this moment, by invisible beings? Are they not gazing at him with pity and with wonder? Ought not all present to gather about him, and to pray for him? My friend, do you know what you do? Shall we pause, while you *do* pray? Suppose we were now to say to this assembly, in the language of the prophet, "Come now, and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant," and let all, who are ready to comply, give a sign; would you alone give no sign? If all the rest were to join, would you be the only one to remain out of the holy confederation? Shall we pause, then, while you now pray? Shall we wait, while you now offer your first entreaty

for mercy? Yes, now; it will gloriously signalize the morning service. Now; the news would be conveyed to heaven; it would be hastening on the day, when all flesh shall be seen prostrate before God in prayer; it would be preparing additional lustre for that day, when all the crowns in the universe shall be cast at the Saviour's feet—for then your crown would be amongst them.

CHRISTIAN EXCELLENCE:

A SERMON

DELIVERED AT HOLYWELL-MOUNT CHAPEL, CHAPEL STREET, CURTAIN ROAD, LONDON, APRIL 28, 1839.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest (or venerable), *whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.* PHILIPPIANS iv. 8.

ON reading this remarkable language, one is almost unconsciously led to exclaim, How noble and ennobling a system is the Gospel of Christ! how triumphantly does it sustain a comparison with every other religion! how effectually does it eclipse, how gloriously transcend them all! For poor humanity has had its systems—systems of philosophy, morality and religion—systems which for a time resounded through the world—systems which were to bring heaven down to earth, or to raise earth to an equality with heaven; it has had them by hundreds, if not by thousands.

Of all these, however, the system of Plato, I suppose, by aiming at what he called the true, the beautiful and the good, is to be regarded as approaching nearest to the surpassing excellence of the Gospel. To that system the apostle is supposed by some to refer in the text; for it is professed to be composed chiefly of whatever things were true and valuable in the various systems which had preceded it. But this character he claims in an infinitely higher sense for

Christianity. For even if that human system had ascertained the true, the beautiful and the good, how could it have demonstrated that the true was not false, how could it have embodied the beautiful and made it visible, how could it have induced mankind to aim at the good or to practise the useful? Where were its motives? what were its solemn sanctions? and accordingly, where were its churches or societies of men embodying and propagating its principles? But ask you for the motives, which the Gospel supplies? The apostle never enforces its duties apart from its motives. Before uttering the practical appeal in the text, he takes us in the second chapter, to the cross—takes us there to behold an event, which whoever considers feels that it contains motives for all duties and incentives equal to all sacrifices—takes us to behold Him, who "was in the form of God," "making himself of no reputation, taking upon him the form of a servant," still humbling himself, still passing from one depth of ignominy to a lower still, till a cross receives him, and death arrests his further descent. Ask you then for the practical results of the Gospel—for its churches and active societies? Oh! what miracles of moral transformation has it not accomplished! Was not the apostle—was not Philippi itself—an instance? There its first triumph was to change the very jail into a church—the receptacle of a city's depravity into a sanctuary of God; and there already it had begun to leaven and to assimilate unto its own glorious nature the mass of depraved humanity around. Nor was it yet satisfied. He calls them in the text to higher attainments and greater usefulness yet. Perfect itself, it labours to produce, and is impatient to behold, perfection in all who embrace it.

Christian friends, the application of this subject to yourselves is obvious and inevitable. If the character of Christianity be so lovely, your character as its professors must be proportionally excellent. If it actually produced in the Philippians an amount of Christian excellence, which called forth apostolical exulta-

tion—and if it still remains what it ever was—it comes this morning into the midst of this church, and makes inquisition for the same excellence. It calls over (if I may say so) the muster-roll of all the Christian graces, nor allows even one to be absent. Taking you to a mount of vision, which commands a view of all the moral greatness and goodness the world, the universe, has ever known, it says to you—Aspire to imitate the whole; whatever you behold in the wide horizon true or venerable, just or pure, lovely or of good report, take them all to your heart and make them your own. It does not specify, you perceive, what things these are; it seems to say—Aim at universal excellence; cherish the ennobling sentiment, that there is nothing too good for Christian humility to hope, nothing too great for Christian devotedness to attempt; propose to yourselves the loftiest standard of Christian piety, and resolve devotedly to reach it; devise some exalted idea, and determine in the strength of God to attain it; vow to live for the cross of Christ; do this, and it will not be necessary to particularize and prescribe. For remember, he who dedicates himself to a great object is a law to himself; he who acts on a lofty principle lifts his whole nature at once; he who aims at an exalted end is more than resolving on good acts or even good habits—he is necessitating and producing them; he who lives for a noble purpose is keeping all the laws at once, without feeling that he is subjected to any.

Christian friends, the interesting occasion which has called you together, and indeed any event which forms an era in the existence of a church, may be regarded as opening a fresh page of existence, and presenting a loud providential call to enter on a higher stage of Christian excellence. In order to render this call intelligible and impressive, allow me to enforce at least the spirit of the text by showing—that whatever there is attractive in Christian morality, you are to exemplify it—whatever there is exalted and mature in scriptural piety, you are to aim to attain it—whatever useful in

Christian activity, you should labour to accomplish it—whatever there is tender in solicitude for the salvation of others, you should cherish it—whatever lofty in Christian enterprise, you are to sympathise with it—and whatever there is sublime and animating in Christian motive, you are to live under its ever-present influence.

I. Addressing myself especially to the professed disciples of Christ, permit me to remark, first, that *whatever there is lovely in the practice of Christian morality, you are to exemplify it.*

Not only is Christian piety compatible with the discharge of social duties; it will not absolve us from them. It will not allow us to be idle spectators on the great theatre of life. It enters the domestic circle, and addresses an appropriate word to the husband and the wife, to the parent and the child. It takes the servant by the hand and daily leads him to his appointed task, and thus invests his station with a dignity, beside which the most splendid indolence is eclipsed and disgraced. It accompanies the tradesman to the place of business—takes its seat by the judge—and establishes the very throne in righteousness. And thus, while it seems to be intent only on the happiness of eternity, it overlooks nothing connected with the well-being of time. It even seeks to prepare us for the duties and immunities of that higher state, partly by exercising us first in the duties of our earthly condition.

And the reason of all this is obvious—that the object of the Gospel is not to repeal our original and natural relations, but to remedy and restore our moral constitution, and to do this through the medium of those relations. It is the tendency of sin to destroy them; the object of the Gospel is to employ them—and to restore and sanctify, that it may employ them. Hence in not only republishes the duties of the second table, but adds tenderness and power to their sanction. However exhausted its treasury may be, it will not allow the undutiful son to enrich it by saying "Corban," and casting into it that which the wants of his

parents require. However naked its altar, it scorns to accept "robbery for burnt-offering." However deserted its shrine, it will not allow the angry suppliant to approach it, till he has gone and become "reconciled to his brother." And however long any of its offices in the house of God may have stood vacant, the only condition on which it will allow them to be filled is that the occupants "first rule well their own house, and have a good report of them that are without."

And the advantage of all this is as obvious, as the reason in which it originates; at all events, the evil resulting from the want of it is obvious enough. Could the Gospel overlook these proprieties, without arming against itself all that is most deep and central in human nature? Can a church neglect them, without soon becoming a proverb and a reproach? Is not the want of honesty, integrity, natural affection—of any of the domestic or social virtues—in two or three of its members only, sufficient to blast its reputation and to impair its usefulness for years, if not for ever? On the other hand, can the members of a church honour these relations and cultivate these virtues, without augmenting their influence and their means of usefulness? Oh! my friends, if you would "adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things," if you would win for it the secret admiration of the unconverted, and acquire for it an influence over their hearts, exemplify the attractions of Christian morality. Think what prodigious effect it would give to the Gospel, if all its professors did this. If they took "whatsoever things are true and just and pure and lovely" and formed them into a bright and beauteous diadem, what a halo of glory would it shed over the whole of their earthly course! what a kind of emblazonment would be thrown over the very name of Christanity! how impossible it would be to pronounce that name, without calling up in the heart feelings of homage and of love!

And is not this what the Gospel actually requires? Can it consistently be satisfied with less? Does it not seek to enlist into its service all the relations which

bind us together, and all the natural means by which we influence each other? It cannot do without them; consistently with the divine appointment, it cannot do without them. They are the only instruments, with which it has to work. It seeks to win the infant's heart, by looking up through the eyes, and caressing it in the tones of maternal affection. The father's love, the sister's entreaty, the brother's warning, the persuasion of friendship, the active attentions of neighbourly kindness, the tradesman's integrity and weight of character, the disinterested beneficence of public life—it wants them all, has work for them all. And even if it have them, the kindest tones cannot equal the tenderness of *its* entreaties, the hottest tears cannot equal its anguish over human misery, the most throbbing heart cannot beat quick enough to satisfy its eager longing for human salvation. All the influence which the church can wield in its behalf cannot do justice to its free and full and gushing benevolence, cannot furnish channels wide and deep enough to pour forth the ocean of its grace.

II. But Christian morality supposes piety; the holier a church is, the more is it likely to excel in the practice of the virtues, for the more will it live under the influence of the motives which produce them. Then, secondly—*whatsoever things are exalted and mature in Christian piety aim to attain.*

If the holiness of the individual Christian be progressive, then should the piety of a church be progressive also (for what is the piety of the whole, but the collective piety of all its parts?); and if the individual believer should say, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended," the language of the church should also be, "This one thing *we* do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, we press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." And yet how few the churches, whose conduct would justify the adoption of this language! How many a church is seen to languish on from year to year, con-

tent with a bare existence! How many a church, which not only exists, but wears the general aspect of health, is yet content to remain at a stand for years together! as if it had reached the standard of a perfect church, it never exhibits a single sign of self-dissatisfaction, or makes an additional onward move in the path of Christian activity. And how many a church, it is to be feared, that does exhibit some of these signs—signs of increase in wealth, in numbers, and even in Christian activity, signs like those which led an ancient church to say, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing"—is yet wanting, like that church, in a proportional increase of scriptural piety! Indeed *where is* the church, that aims as high in this respect, or advances as rapidly as it ought? *Where is* the church, which, if it does "run well" for a time, does not soon begin to indulge in that self-complacency, which is the sure precursor of a fall? *Where is* the church, which thinks of making that grandest of all experiments—how much it may enjoy of God, and how much (even to the highest possible amount) it may achieve of Christian usefulness? And consequently—*where is* the church, which, if He who "walks in the midst" of the churches were to pronounce on its character, might not expect him to say, "I have somewhat against thee?"

Christian brethren, is it true that you might expect him to say this of you? and will you not anxiously examine what that "somewhat against you" would prove to be? and will you not pray for grace to discover and remedy the defect? and will you not henceforth aim at whatever is exalted and mature in Christian piety? "What! know ye not that ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost?" and what is a "temple" without piety? Know ye not, that your only glory in the eye of Christ, and your only distinction from the world around, consists in your spirituality of character and your devotedness to his service? Know ye not, that there is a something, the want of which alone can account for the comparative inefficiency of our

churches and the slow progress of the Gospel? It is the want of that holiness of character, which is essential to give it weight with the world? Then will you not cast out from the midst of you every thing evil as soon as it shows itself, and faithfully administer that Christian discipline appointed on purpose to promote holiness, and attach supreme importance to every thing calculated to increase your spirituality? Is it on account of the want of that Christian devotedness, which counts nothing that may be possessed its own? Then will you not feel, as those who are "bought with a price," that all you have and are is the property of Christ? Is it the want of that Christian union, for which Christ prayed when he entreated "that they all may be one?" And will you not join in that lofty supplication? Shall he offer it alone? Will you not take the entire church into the ample embrace of your Christian affection?

Remember, however, that when you *have* "given all diligence," and have "added to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly-kindness and charity," even then you will not have reached the limit of your progress. Never can you reach that, till you have entirely exhausted the power of prayer, or till the Holy Spirit has no more quickening and enabling influences to impart. And *when shall that be?*

As long then as the throne of grace continues to be accessible and you continue to approach it in earnest and united supplication, and as long as the Spirit of all grace is able to replenish your hearts with his influences, so long should you continue to advance in whatsoever is exalted and mature in Christian piety.

III. But such piety is diffusive; it cannot exist without making itself felt by all around, and the promise of God is, that it *shall be* felt so as to issue in his glory. Then, thirdly—*whatever is useful in personal Christian activity, aim to accomplish it.*

As a church, remember, the very relative design of your formation is the increase of your usefulness.

Every thing in nature exists for a purpose; even the atom of the rock has its appointed place and its definite end. Surely, then, man—and of all men the Christian—is not exempt from this law; he has not been "Created anew in Christ Jesus" for mere self-enjoyment or show. And if not the individual Christian, still less a number of these combined. As a church, the mere circumstance of your separation from the world is designed of itself to attract attention. Your number is to invest you with comparative importance; your formation and existence as a visible society, complete in itself, is to raise you into the rank of a distinct power. As a church, you are entrusted with means, either exclusively adapted, or eminently calculated to affect and benefit the world around. You possess, for instance, "the ministry of reconciliation;" and of what use is that, but "to beseech men to be reconciled unto God?" As a church, you have a special sphere of labour. However small the circle of Christian influence which each one separately filled before, from the moment you constitute a church, the hand which so forms you draws around you a circle, which includes the region round about. As a church, you are now charged with a collective responsibility. All the souls within that circle, are in a sense given into your hand. All its sick are to be visited, all its ignorant instructed, all its children "trained up in the way they should go," its widows and fatherless and destitute visited in the time of their affliction; the whole of its area is to be filled with appropriate "works of faith and labours of love." Hence all your means, the mite of the widow and the wealth of the affluent, the leisure of one and the influence of another, the ardour of the young, the wisdom of the aged, the resources of the whole, are to be combined, surrendered and actively employed. Here the motto of each is to be—"None of us liveth to himself." Each one is to be assigned a post of labour. The influence of each, by union with all, is made to be felt; and as often as others are added to you, you are to regard the

circle as proportionally enlarged, and are again to fill it to the circumference with the influence of the cross.

But all this, I say, supposes that every individual member is prepared to take his post as an agent for Christ. It does not allow the indolent to fold his arms, and devolve his duty on another. It does not permit the fashionable professor to wait till Christian labour becomes genteel. It will not permit the wealthy to buy off his personal service by the bribe of large donations; it requires both—his activity and his donation too. Whether it contains a man for every post or not, it is certain that it contains a post for every man. And hence the first inquiry, which some churches make of a newly-admitted member, is—And what shall *your* post be?

Christian friends, were I to be asked to what it was owing chiefly that the early triumphs of the Gospel were arrested, how it was that Christian usefulness died out of the world and piety out of the church, I should say that it was to be ascribed chiefly to that master-device of Satan, by which the Christian professor was led to suppose that he could do almost every thing by proxy—that there was an order of men, on whom for a certain consideration he could devolve his duties both to God and man. By these means it was, that the requirements of God came to be lost sight of, and the claims of the world to be utterly neglected. Now this, I need not remind you, is substantial Popery; the very essence of that system consists in undertaking to exempt its votaries from their personal responsibility, in finding a price for every duty and a discharge from every claim of individual accountableness. Brethren, we pride ourselves in our Protestantism; but from how much of that enormous system have we been rescued! For just as much as still cleaves to us, just so much are we effectually disabled from "doing the first works" and emulating the first days of the Christian church. Now judging from the past, we should say that the Reformation rescued us from only a part of Popery—from that part which

blinded men to a sense of their personal concern in the affairs of their own salvation. But while the Protestant wonders at the infatuation of the Papist, in imagining that any thing can exempt from the necessity of personal diligence in seeking his own salvation, are not we objects of equal wonder in acting so generally as if we thought any thing could exempt us from the duty of personal activity in seeking the salvation of others? If the one is Popish, equally so in spirit is the other also. And oh! glorious as the Reformation was for the church, in rescuing its members from the grasp of a spiritual despotism and making each one feel the necessity of personal faith and personal holiness, *as* glorious will that reformation be for the world, which shall complete the work of deliverance by rescuing them also from the grasp of selfishness, and making each one feel his accountableness to God for personal activity in the work of human salvation. Never till the Christian feels himself as much ordained to diffuse the Gospel, as the minister is ordained to preach it—never till a church regards itself as a society organised expressly for that diffusion—will it be aware of its vast capabilities in the hand of God for blessing the world. What but this feeling in the hearts of a few has originated all the Christian instrumentality, which is at this moment at work? And if sense of responsibility for personal activity in only a few instances has led to so much, what might we not hope under God from the individual and united activity of the universal church?

Whatsoever things are useful, then, in personal Christian activity, aim to accomplish.

IV. But all this supposes a deep solicitude for human salvation; he who sympathises with Christ in actively seeking the salvation of men, must have sympathised with him first in his compassion for human misery. Then, fourthly—*whatever is tender in Christian solicitude for the salvation of others, cherish it.*

The cross is the utterance of divine compassion; and the church collected around it is the proof of its

power. The compassion, which bled on the cross, is supposed to be in the hearts of all its members. They know the wretchedness of sin, into which the sinner sunk; they look forward in imagination to the end of his course—hear already his doom pronounced—see the pit open to receive him—and hear by anticipation his hopeless cries for deliverance. And the deep anxiety they should feel to snatch the fire-brands from the flame, and to quench them in the blood of Christ, should impart a depth of tenderness to their tone, an earnestness of solicitude to their manner, and a combination and energy to their efforts, which, by the blessing of God, nothing should be able to resist.

But who feels this? Who sympathises with Christ in his travail for souls? How little do we feel with God on that particular point, on which (if on no other) the strongest bond of union might be supposed to exist—compassion for depraved, guilty and perishing men! Who is there, that makes the burden of a dying world his own?—that goes about as Paul did, with "great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart," oppressed and borne down by the weight of its woes? Jesus wept over the guilt and obduracy of Jerusalem—a single city; who is there prepared to mingle their tears with his over *this* city—over the guilt and impending destruction of a thousand cities—of a world? Abraham and Moses, David and Jeremiah and Paul evinced the tenderness and depth of their compassion for men by tears, entreaties, and restless anguish of soul; who is there now, that can say, "Rivers of water run down mine eyes because they keep not thy law?" who now is heard exclaiming, "Oh! that my head were waters and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night, for the slain of the daughter of my people?" Who now asseverates as with an oath, "I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren and kinsmen's sake?"

Christians! are there not souls perishing in the very midst of you? Do they not meet with you every Sabbath—sit by your side every service? Have they not

done so for years? Are they not yet unsaved? Have not the very sermons, which have proved to you a "savor of life unto life," proved to them a "savor of death unto death?" Has not mercy wept over them in vain? Has not Jesus Christ been "evidently set forth crucified before them" in vain? Can you conceive any thing more deserving your deep commiseration? You will have to appear as witnesses against them; can you conceive of any prospect more appalling? Oh! look at them in imagination, till your eyes fill with tears, till your hearts fill with pity and yearn over them. Pray for them. Your Lord has died for them; will you not pray for them? It is your interest to do so. At present they constitute your weakness, your obstacles to enlarged prosperity; they impair the effect of every sermon delivered, of every prayer offered, whereas if converted they might constitute your strength. Pray for them. It is your office; you are to be intercessors for them, as Christ is for you. Pray for them. It shall be your triumph; for your prayers offered in faith shall "avail much." Hold meetings of prayer for them; in that act alone, angels would see occasion to rejoice in the presence of God, and in its glorious results Christ would "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied."

V. But it is impossible to feel and act thus for some, without being conscious of similar solicitude for others; Christian compassion knows nothing of geographical limits; the cross vibrates to the sounds of human misery in every part of the earth, and the heart of the Christian is to thrill in sympathy with it. Then, fifthly—*whatever is lofty in Christian enterprise, aim to sympathise with and promote it.*

After what we have said we cannot be supposed to mean that the duties of the family are to be neglected, or the duties of the particular church to which we belong overlooked, for any other objects however magnificent. Nor need they. Our duty is in this respect coincident with our most enlarged desires; for by filling the sphere immediately around us first, we are

multiplying our agencies for wider and still wider influence. And not only so; such are the gracious arrangements of the scheme of mercy, that by earnest supplications at the throne of grace the obscurest believer can touch and set in motion an almighty agency for the good of the world; such the facilities which exist at present for the operations of Christian beneficence, that by contributing his mite the poorest Christian can become an instrument of good to the ends of the earth and to nations yet unborn; and such the vast and varied machinery which that beneficence has put into action, that the humblest church is summoned to its part, and invited to share in the honour of restoring a ruined world.

And will you not aspire to partake of it? Can you ascend that mount of vision, which takes in the field of the world, without marking how vast the multitudes, how urgent and awful their condition, and how momentous the results depending on our hastening to save them? Can you mark how uniformly God enlarges the successes of his people in proportion as they enlarge the sphere of their activity, without feeling a holy determination that "no man shall take *your* crown?" Can you remember the magnitude of the work to be accomplished, and the claims which the Saviour has upon you, without feeling the strong necessity of entire consecration to the service, and wishing that you could multiply your means a thousand-fold? Oh! whatever there is ennobling in Christian enterprise, be ambitious to mingle in and practically to assist it.

VI. But all this supposes adequate motives; and accordingly, if the text does not contain, it at least suggests them. "If there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things." In other words —*whatever there is sublime and animating in Christian motive, live under its ever-present influence.*

Are we not apt to act from the lowest allowable, rather than from the highest possible motives to Christian devotedness? and is not this one reason why our

instrumentality is so feeble and inefficient?—whereas the apostle here seems to invoke all that is inspiring and noble from every part of the universe. "If there be any virtue and if there be any praise," he intimates that the church has heard of it, has had it, and that we are to live as in its presence—that whatever the world has known of great and good has belonged to the church—that its influence goes on accumulating from age to age, and is devolved on each successive generation in the church, so that we in the present day are living under the collective influences of all the past, and moving under an impulsive power greater than that of any preceding age. "Ye are come," says the apostle, "to mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven."

Your union with a Christian church brings you into connection with all that was great, and under the influence of all that was good, in the Jewish church. True, the temple is gone, and the economy abolished; but all its proper and mighty influence is existing still. Nothing that belonged to it existed for itself. Every judgment that made it awful looked on beyond its own time, and is frowning still. "All these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." Each of its prophets spoke less for his own time than for ours; so that for us in effect he is prophesying still. "Not unto themselves," says an apostle, "but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported to us" by the Gospel. Every event which distinguished them is still in actual operation, diffusing the elements of other events and propagating its influence somewhere. And where shall we look for it, but within the limits of the Christian church? The Bible is the true conductor of all the holy influences the church has ever known. From it the Jewish church received "whatsoever things were true and lovely and of good report" in the preceding

economy. In that church, it may be truly said, Abel, "though dead, was ever speaking;" and Enoch, "the seventh from Adam," was ever "prophesying of the coming of the Lord." There the patriarchs came and lived again for their posterity; there the rod of Aaron was ever blooming, the manna ever fresh, the rod of Moses ever working and repeating its miracles; there Sinai reared its awful head, and from its thundering top its law was ever demanding for God the heart of the world, and demanding for every man the love of all the rest. In the same sense the Bible has now discharged all the accumulated moral influence of the last economy into the present; the Christian church has received the whole. Here in effect the temple still stands; though in a literal respect not one stone of that sacred pile remains upon another, in the hallowed influence which it sheds over the church of God it still lifts up its awful front; its fires still burn, its victims still bleed, its "day of atonement" still returns. We behold them now; we shall see them in eternity.

All the great events and solemn transactions of the Old Testament may be regarded has having taken place in the Christian church—within these walls. Here, in the ministry of the Gospel, *they do* come, and occur again. Here its miracles are still convincing, and its angelic messengers still appearing. Here Moses is still teaching self-renunciation, by wishing himself "blotted out from the book" of life for the good of others—and David leading the intercessions of the church for the salvation of the ends of the earth—and the prophets still "testifying of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." And what is more, here they are all present at once. Truths and events, which for the Jewish church were scattered thinly over a long tract of time, are here collected to a point and made operative at once; ages, with the men who made them memorable—and dispensations, with all the miraculous facts and sublime disclosures which distinguished them—pass in quick and close succession before us, and we feel ourselves standing under the eye

and influence of the whole. And more still; great as was the influence which that economy was calculated to exercise during its actual existence, that influence has gone on gathering strength with each successive age, and is comparably mightier for us, than for those who lived in its immediate presence. All that was evangelical and immortal in its principles was far in advance of the time then present, and was destined to act chiefly on the future. Who does not feel, for instance, that the lofty aspirations of the psalmist for the universal diffusion of the truth, and the splendid visions of prophecy in which those aspirations were seen realised, are only as yet *beginning* to produce their legitimate effect, and that with every year that effect under God is likely to increase?

But together with all this influence from the former economy, there comes a mightier influence peculiar to the present—a power so irresistible, that wherever it has had free course it has swept away the thrones of idolatry, changed the aspect of society, and left its sacred impress upon every object it has touched. Ours is THE CROSS—the great "power of God"—not only absorbing and concentrating all the influences of the past, but charged with a new power direct from God—containing in its bosom all the springs of benevolence the world will ever know, an energy of expansive goodness capable of replenishing the universe with light and with love. Here God is seen enriching the world with a gift, which leaves us nothing to ask for more. Here Christ is seen taking the world to his heart, seizing our nature as it trembles over the bottomless gulph, assuming it into union with his own, taking our place under the descending stroke of justice and suffering in our stead. Here angels, drawn from heaven, bend to gaze, and labour to comprehend the mystery of incarnate love. Here the infinite Spirit himself, drawn down from the heights of his everlasting dwelling place, descends as "a rushing mighty wind," and the cries of penitents are heard around. Apostles come, to lose themselves in wonder, and exclaim,

"Herein is love!"—and to surcharge their hearts with a benevolence, which impels them to the ends of the earth, testifying that "the Father hath sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."

And what do we behold in this result, but the appropriate answer to the prayer of Christ—"Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." The sanctification he prayed for was not their personal holiness (though that was indispensable,) but their relative or official consecration; "As thou hast sent me into the world," he adds, "even so have I also sent them into the world, and for their sakes I sanctify myself" or devote myself "that they also might" (in the same sense) "be sanctified" or devoted "through the truth"—that standing under the action of my cross, feeling the full influence of that mystery of compassion, beholding how I thy Son "the brightness of thy glory" there devote and set myself apart as a sacrifice for the manifestation of thine infinite love, they may feel impelled to devote themselves with a similar entireness of consecration to the proclamation of that love through the world. Oh! if the influence of promises, comparatively vague in their meaning and indefinitely distant in their fulfilment, could produce under God the martyr piety of Abel, the dauntless fidelity of Enoch, the persevering obedience of Noah, the missionary pilgrimage of Abraham, the self-sacrificing zeal of Moses—if the comparatively feeble influences of the Jewish dispensation could create under God those splendid constellations of excellence, which glow and burn in the eleventh chapter to the Hebrews—who shall set limits to that moral greatness and that Christian devotedness, which the mightier influences of the Gospel shall produce? To know that a whole economy has existed for us (that is, for the church of which we are members,) that for us its heroes lived and its martyrs died—to know that for us that economy of a thousand years was at last dismissed, as for us it had at first been called into being, leaving to us all its rich accumulations of inspired wisdom, God-like

example, and moral wealth—this alone should surely be sufficient to teach us the greatness of living for the future, and to kindle in our hearts unquenchable desire of transmitting the great inheritance to those who succeed us, not merely unimpaired, but augmented by the influence of our own devotedness. But to know that that which displaced that economy was the personal advent, the actual sacrifice, the visible humiliation of the Son of God—that the eternal Father should have "so loved us, as to give" from his bosom "the express image of his person"—should surely come on us with an effect, which should leave us no power but that of obedience, no wish but that of multiplying our means of serving him ten thousand-fold. Before that gift could have been bestowed, the ocean of the divine benevolence must have been stirred in all its unfathomable depths; should the shallow stream of our gratitude be only rippled upon the surface? Of all his infinite resources He freely gave the sum; of the mite-like penury of our nature, shall we return him only a fraction? To know that He "who was rich" should "for our sakes have become poor," that the second Person in the mysterious Godhead should have personally advanced to our rescue, descending from one depth of humiliation to another, till he had reached a depth which made it impossible for divine condescension itself to stoop lower—this is knowledge, which, as it has moved all heaven, should surely be sufficient to move and agitate all earth. To hear that event succeeded by the signs and sounds of another advent, the advent of the Holy Spirit—to find that thus each of the three Persons in the awful and mysterious Godhead is infinitely interested in our recovery, and that so intimately is the compassion of the triune God set upon the object, that no truth is left untaught, no miracle of mercy unperformed, no angel or agency unemployed, no part of the universe unmoved, no perfection of the divine nature unconcerned, no aspect of the divine character unexhibited, which is in the least essential

to its accomplishment—this should leave no portion of the church at rest, no means within its farthest reach untaxed, for the attainment of the same glorious end. To find that this is manifestly the divine design, that Christ as the Head of the church on earth authoritatively requires that each individual Christian surrender himself and live supremely for the conversion of others, that these unite into particular societies for the conversion of greater numbers still, that all these societies in every land combine in simplicity of purpose for the salvation of the entire race—to find that as the President of the universe he commands and combines the sympathies and instrumentality of the church in heaven with that of the church on earth, assigning to angels the time and the place for their agency in providence concurring with his movements both in providence and in grace—and to find that in his mediatorial capacity, he even adds the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit himself—surely this should leave no Christian unemployed, no church unrelated, no agency we could invoke on earth or in heaven to be absent from our combined endeavours to carry it into effect. And to find that this design is as practical as it is obligatory—to hear other Christians avowing their readiness to be messengers or martyrs, honoured or accursed, any thing or nothing, so that they might be instrumental in promoting it—to see churches selecting and sending out such men to carry the Gospel forward, and other churches emulating and imitating their example—to find that each convert as he comes into the church is expected to be ever at his post, and to find that each church as it comes into being is expected to help forward in the universal object—to see that each church is expected to join in the triumph of all, so that the success of one church is the rejoicing of all, and that if they suspend their efforts for a time, it is only to prostrate themselves in prayer for that aid which the Spirit alone can impart and which furnishes them with energy and means for more vigorous endeavours

and louder triumphs still—this is a spectacle, which should surely leave no other question on the lips of every individual Christian, than "Where is *my* post? What shall *I* do?" and no other law for the church universal than that of entire consecration. Now this was the prayer of Christ, not for the apostles only, but for them also (he adds) "which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me;" finding themselves acted on by the presence of "whatsoever things are pure and lovely and of good report," by hallowed and benignant influences from from every quarter and from the remotest period of the church, finding themselves surrounded by lofty examples of Christian devotedness, and ever standing in the presence of his wondrous cross, he prayed that they might feel themselves impelled to make his consecration the model and motive of their own, that God might be glorified and man saved.

Be it remembered, also, that there is a sense, in which we of the present day sustain the accumulated responsibility of the eighteen centuries, which have revolved since that prayer was uttered. In each succeeding age, "the truth" to which that prayer referred (that is, the Gospel) has been exercising its consecrating influence, and instrumentally creating eminent examples of moral power—examples of conscientiousness, which treated no duty as unwelcome, and which evaded no obligation—of fidelity, which spared no sin, nor allowed any iniquity (however splendid and powerful) to pass unrebuked—examples of courage, which cowered before no opposition and shrunk from no conflict—of enlarged benevolence, which knew no limits to its plans and toils and travels for the welfare of man—examples of Christian self-abandonment, which swore eternal devotedness to Christ, though in the presence of the flames which were kindled for its martyrdom—and of love for man, which even in those flames wept over the misery of the world and agonis-

ed in prayer for its recovery. These examples are not lost. Though their memory is not embalmed in the volume of inspiration, their influence has been really added to that of patriarchs and prophets, of apostles and primitive saints. Whether we are conscious of its stimulating power or not, we are all at this moment reaping its advantages, and are consequently standing under the weight of an increased responsibility.

And to this is also to be added the influence acting on us from the prophetic disclosures of the future. The torch, which the hand of prophecy holds up, throws its beams onward to the consummation of all things. By this light we catch glimpses of noble examples yet to arise, and of glories yet to dawn. Many are seen "running to and fro" with the message of salvation, multitudes flocking to embrace it, angels pouring destruction on its foes, mountainous obstacles rolled from its path, nations walking in its light, heaven and earth celebrating its triumphs, and Christ encircled by his redeemed myriads and receiving the homage of the renewed universe. One of the obvious intention of these disclosures is, that by the certain prospect they afford of ultimate success the church may be encouraged to act out its divine design, and to throw all its sanctified energies into the object of the world's recovery. This is the effect, which they have had on many of its members in every age; "having seen them afar off," and caught their inspiration, the martyr for Christ has embraced the block, the minister has startled the slumbering church, the missionary has gone forth to arouse the slumbering world; the saint, like David, has exclaimed in death, "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory"—and the church has echoed with the response of thousands adding, "Amen and Amen." And for us the light of prophecy still burns, that on us it may produce the same effect.

And shall it *not* produce it? "If there be any virtue," here there is nothing else; and shall we not

copy it? "If there be any praise," here nothing but praise awaits the devoted Christian; and shall we not aspire to win it? Oh! if there existed a certain method of extinguishing all human misery and replenishing the world with joy, would you not desire to promote it? Such a method there is. All the treasures of eternity have been lavished on it; "all creation is groaning and travailing in pain together" for want of it; and all the voices of heaven and earth are urging you to take part in it. If you knew of a scheme so vast in its sweep as to subordinate all other plans to its own designs, so varied in its workings as to demand the strenuous activity of every agent in the universe, and yet so self-sufficient as absolutely to stand in need of none, would you not count it the highest honour to take part in it? Need I remind you that such a plan there is?—that in the arrangements of that plan a post of activity is assigned to each of you, and that in that post (which awaited your coming into the world,) the whole of your consecrated influence was bespoke from eternity? If we could inform you of an end, so great that all other ends stand to it only in the relation of means, so lofty that there is nothing higher, so glorious that every thing else is honoured by serving it, would you not pant to be identified with it? Need I remind you that such an end there is?—that the one point, the sole end, to which every thing in the universe of God is tending, is to "the praise of the glory of his grace"—that apart from that end, nothing is great or good—that connected with it, nothing is mean or little—that it hallows whatever it touches, and enobles whatever it employs—that consequently it is our highest wisdom to form such a plan, each one for himself, as shall link us on to that infinite ultimate end as its humble willing agents, and as shall appropriate all our moments and all our powers to this grand design? If we could tell you of a day when all the holy excellence in the universe shall be collected together in the presence of God, and all the holy beings in the universe shall be convened together to admire and to praise it, and when

God himself shall applaud it in language with which eternity shall never cease to resound, would you not cheerfully give all the world (were it yours) to share in the transports of that day? Need I remind you, that such a day there will be?—that Christ himself will preside over its transactions, and that inconceivable eternal blessing will be his certain award to every one present devoted to his service? If in the revolutions of time there should come a period, when events should thicken, when all the agencies of providence should seem urged into unusual activity, and all things seem rushing to that final issue, would you not long to live in that period and to take part in its scenes? Need I remind you that that time has come—that that period is the present? Brethren, we stand in the midst of a scheme, which unites us with all the past, and is in progress with all the future. Upon our heads the relations, influences, and consequent responsibilities of all the past meet and rest; and to us the ends of the earth, the remotest generations of time, and all the holy beings and interests in the universe are looking for corresponding fidelity and zeal. Whoever may deem it necessary to form plans of independent action, *we* are surely exempted from that necessity; for we ourselves form part of a plan, in which every being, from the loftiest archangel to the lowliest saint, has his course assigned, and every holy act its appointed effect, so that the only solicitude left for us is how best we may satisfy its high requirements. Boast who may, of extensive relations and influences; this plan connects us with every being and agency in the past, and places in our hand lines of interminable relation and influence with all the universal and endless future. Tremble who may, under a sense of responsibility; upon us "the ends of the world are come." Our very position consecrates us to the loftiest service, clothes us with the weightiest obligations, surrounds us with anxious eyes and cries of solicitude from every quarter of the divine dominion. For the church to be faithful NOW, is to save the world. Now, if ever, "the weak

should be as David, and David as an angel of the Lord." Now, if ever, prayer should wrestle—liberality should bring forth its richest offerings, its final mite—the church should unite, and clothe itself with zeal. For now, if ever, crowns may be gained, and kingdoms won, and a world in the crisis of its danger may be saved—crowns to be cast at the feet of Christ, kingdoms of which Christ is the rightful Lord, and a world from which he is destined to derive his richest revenue of praise for ever.

May God command his blessing.—Amen.

Christian friends, I may suppose that nearly all of you are acquainted with the particular circumstances, which have called us together this morning. For the information of such of you as may not be acquainted with the occasion of our convening, I will read you the following statement:—

"This chapel was enlarged last year; but the alterations could not then be completed. Besides the sittings obtained for adults, the gallery built for the Sabbath school will hold two hundred and sixty-eight children; the ceiling, gas, and pulpit, are entirely new; the substantial repairs have been heavy and extensive. It was stated last year, that the expenses would only amount to about eight hundred pounds, but they have exceeded that sum. The church and congregation have given so liberally, that if about one hundred and thirty pounds are collected this day, the whole of the expenses will be liquidated. It is hoped that this sum will be raised before the day closes. And an earnest appeal is made to the friends of the Redeemer now assembled, on behalf of so Christian and legitimate an object. If all contribute, (and all can give in proportion to their means,) the amount required will be realised."

As an appropriate conclusion to the remarks which have been advanced this morning, and in reference to

the collection now to be made, I might have added, had your time permitted—Whatsoever things are noble in Christian liberality, emulate and exceed them. I will, however, add but one sentence in addition to this statement. If, as we have remarked, in the arrangements of the mediatorial kingdom a post of duty is assigned for every Christian, it is as true that at that post there is a duty assigned for his every moment; the duty of *this* moment is Christian liberality.

ESSAYS, &c.

THE BIBLE.

Not long ago a proposition was made to prepare a book of *asbestos*, whose pages should record the annals of the world; and as the material is incombustible, and would survive the fires of the last day, the volume was to be called "The Book of Eternity." Vain aspiration! the true book of eternity is already extant—the Bible; and with this vast superiority over the human invention, that it is mysteriously related to a twofold eternity: it is the gift of the past eternity to time, and will finally be restored by time to the eternity which is yet to come. It is a leaf from the book of the divine decrees; it reveals thoughts which were revolved from everlasting in the mind of God; in its march through time it scatters those thoughts like seeds, whose fruit is to be gathered in eternity. It is the voice of one eternity speaking to another, for the benefit of every listening child of time and heir of immortality. It has never been out of the hand of the Eternal; though he graciously presents it to us as an open book, and turns it over, page by page, to the willing eye, yet it will hereafter appear, that he has never allowed it to pass out of his keeping, but has always held it in the hollow of his hand. This alone will account for its preservation.

So copiously did the Fathers quote from the New Testament, especially from the gospels, that had that

portion of Scripture been destroyed, their writings, it is said, would have supplied and restored the whole again. That destruction will eventually take place; but when the final conflagration shall have reduced the material of the Bible to ashes, the indestructible truths will be found transcribed by the finger of the Spirit, and enshrined in the hearts of the renewed. The disembodied spirit of truth will appear before the throne of God, and beholding in every face the reflection of her own image, will justly claim them all for her offspring.

There are certain places on the face of the globe which mankind seem, by general consent, to have selected for the theatres of great events. Such, for instance, is the Plain of Esdrelom, the battle-field of empires, where every nation of the old world has seen its banners wet with the dew of Hermon. And such the Mediterranean, the *naumachia* of the nations, where empire has often been lost and won. But the Bible is the arena of more and higher conflicts still; It is at once the object of contest, the armoury which supplies the weapons, and the chosen ground of struggle. Why has it witnessed more frequent and fierce encounters than any other object on the face of the earth? Ask why is the rock of Gibraltar an object of fierce contention in every war with the power that holds it. Why is the pass of Thermopylæ steeped to the centre with blood? The Bible is the frontier fortress of the church; all the armies of error, in every age, have beleaguered it; but the sons of truth, who hold it for God, have received it with this address, "Here stand, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against you;" and they "loved not their lives unto the death."

The Bible is the true prophet of hope. The books of pagan antiquity sung only of the golden-aged past; for the future, their moral was despair. Like the stern-lights of a ship, the radiance they threw fell only on the track behind. The Bible builds on the future; the chorus of all its songs is of a glory to come. In

the mid-winter of humanity it has gone on sowing light for the righteous—seeds of the sun. And in the captivity of the church, when the daughter of Sion sat disconsolate in her chains, the voice of the Bible has ever been, "Arise, and shine." No dell of Tempe, no garden of the Hesperides, no vale of Cashmere, no slope on the banks of Genesareth, where the seasons met and danced together, ever dazzled with more golden fruit, or charmed with fairer verdure and richer fragrance, than the Bible presents in the moral landscape of the future.

> "O scenes surpassing fable, and yet true!
> Scenes of accomplished bliss! which who can see,
> Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
> His soul refreshed with foretaste of the joy?
> Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
> And clothe all climes with beauty. * * * *
> The various seasons woven into one,
> And that one season an eternal spring."

To the Bible, the great philosophers, legislators, and founders of ancient sects were indebted, directly or indirectly, for nearly every thing excellent in their codes and systems.

> "Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
> Repairing, in their golden urns drew light."

A live coal from off its altar, quickly transmitted,—like the torch passed from hand to hand in the lamp-game of the Grecian youth—kindled the light of Persia, Greece, and Rome. Hence, doubtless, Plato drew the dim conception which he is supposed to have entertained, of the necessity of a divine Mediator; whether from an indistinct echo of the patriarchal faith, or from rays refracted from the Hebrew prophets, through a Phœnician medium, it is not easy to determine. Probably both co-operated, with his own deep sense of necessity, in partially unveiling the awful truth to this divine philosopher, this "plant from the

wreck of Paradise, thrown on the shores of idolatrous Greece."

The Bible is distinguished from every other book professedly inspired—from Shasters of the Brahmin and the Koran of Mahomet—by its earnest commendations of knowledge. Imposture fears the light; the Bible courts and creates it. Not only does it extol knowledge as a glory, it excites a thirst for it, and commands us to seek after it as a most sacred duty.

And, O, what a field for contemplation does it lay open! It is the history of a world, of our own world—its morning, its meridian, its many changes, its prospective close. The countless multitudes of antiquity pass before our eyes, the heroes, and tyrants, and martyrs of old time, their enormous wealth, their glittering palaces, and mighty cities. We hear the tumult of their armies, and the fame of their kings proclaimed,—Assyrian and Persian, Babylonian, Egyptian, and Mede; and all is suddenly swept away. Another king or conqueror comes, and another army, more numerous than the last, and that, too, perishes before our eyes; and another after rises up, and then another. And all these men were our fathers, whose virtues and vices are recorded in blazing letters, and whose punishment or reward is made known to the uttermost regions of the earth, for the benefit and guidance of us their sons. Were it but the ruin of a history it would be venerable; were it a fiction only it would be a grand one; but it is complete and true, it is full of general as well as individual interest, it is replete with simple and manly narration, with passionate appeals, and overwhelming eloquence. It is addressed to ourselves, it is connected with us and our well-being; it gives us a story of the past, and a lesson for the future. There is nothing in Homer which can mate with the soaring spirit of its poetry; there is nothing in Virgil which can equal the gentle pathos of its strains; Dante is less awful, and Ariosto less wild; even Milton, who has topped the sublimity of all other writers, and Shakspeare, who has surpassed the united

world in prodigality of imagery and variety of thought, must yield to the infinite grandeur and beauty which are impressed on the living oracles, or scattered in exuberance over every page.

I have said the Bible is the history of our world; but this is not saying enough, its subject is the fate of worlds, the revolutions of heaven and of earth—destruction and restoration on the vastest scale. It is more than the history of all this, it is the philosophy of the history; and, more than this, the theology of the philosophy. But in the remarks I have made, I have only ascended the steps of the temple, the hallowed interior is yet to be viewed. For the present, it only remains for us to admire the manner in which the Bible embodies its great doctrines, and inculcates its great lessons. It narrates interesting facts, and teaches by example. And here I shall avail myself of a paragraph in Mr. Binney's "Discourses on the Practical Power of Faith:" "We are more likely to be successful in our inculcation of duty, if we not only state what it is right to do, but actually show how it has been done. The mind, in such cases, seems to have the advantage of another sense—it not only hears, but it sees; the understanding is not only put in possession of truth, but the fancy is furnished with illustrations and images. Many a man who could not comprehend the arguments for a particular providence, can feel the proof as seen in the lives of Abraham or Joseph. He whose weakness would be overcome by temptation or calamity, could he remember nothing but the abstract precepts of the preacher, may be stimulated to exert both firmness and faith, by knowing that others have been equally tempted, without sacrficing their virtue, and equally afflicted, without losing their confidence. For this very purpose, we imagine, has the Holy Spirit included so much of an historical nature in the inspired volume. On the same account, our divine Lord conveyed most of his instructions in parables, embodying, in the intelligible actions of men, the particular truth he intended to enforce. This was emphatically

'teaching the multitude.' The mass of mankind feel, rather than reason; they arrive at truth by sensation, rather than by argument; the voice of nature from within, responds to the voice of nature from without. They cannot go along with you, perhaps, in your demonstration of a principle; but they can comprehend the principle itself. They can learn nothing from a laboured disquisition on the beauty of virtue; but they can both see its beauty and feel its attractions, if presented before them in action and character. Now, by becoming familiar with the history of holy men, you will become familiar with the principles of religion itself; for it is these, in fact, you are required to contemplate, embodied in obvious and striking illustrations." On this account I am pleased to notice a book called, "Interesting Narratives from the Sacred Volume, Illustrated and Improved," by the Rev. J. Belcher, a volume of which I have only left myself room to say, that it is calculated to interest and instruct the young, to invigorate the best principles of the Christian, and to aid the Christian minister in his preparation for the pulpit, by giving him a connected bird's-eye view of the many Scripture narratives of which it treats.

DIVINE CONDESCENSION.

Some of the most magnificent expressions of Scripture are those which relate to the Divine condescension. The doctrine that the infinite God, who inhabits immensity and eternity, enters minutely into all the affairs of his creatures, presented to the mind of the psalmist an image of condescension so overwhelming, that he exclaimed, "Who is like unto the Lord our God who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!" Observe, he couples together the things that are in heaven and earth without distinction. Now, to our apprehension, the things of heaven are inconceivably greater, more important, more worthy the Divine attention, than the things of earth. But in the eye of God the difference is only a difference in minute degrees—a difference in degrees of littleness—and therefore, in itself, a very little difference.

Were you, from the top of some lofty eminence, some dizzy height, to look down upon two objects—the one a man and the other a child—though they would doubtless consider the difference between themselves to be very great, to you it would appear to be very little, if any. This, indeed, would arise from the necessary imperfection of your organs of sight—but idea may serve for an illustration. For while to our apprehension the things of heaven are unspeakably greater than the things of earth, we are to bear in mind that the Almighty is infinitely higher then the highest created intelligence in heaven; that while the difference between the highest and the lowest of his creatures can be measured, the difference between him and the highest creature which he has formed

cannot be measured; so that he has to look down—(if we may say so) he has to look down from an infinite height upon the highest as well as upon the lowest, upon the things that are in heaven as well as upon the things that are in the earth. The wonder is that he condescends to regard the things that are in heaven; but having stooped thus far, we are prepared to hear that he stoops a little farther, and regards the things that are on earth. For though there *is* a difference between them, and though his eye measures that difference in all its proportions, yet is it really so insignificant to Him whom heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain, that it is an act of infinite condescension in him to notice either.

Looking at the history of this condescension towards man, there appear to have been four remarkable stages in it, at each of which we behold him carrying it a degree farther than before, until he has reached the very lowest point to which it could be carried. We say nothing of the benignity which he displayed towards our first parents, while yet they retained their original purity,—benignity which showed itself in symbolically walking with them in paradise, in visible manifestations, in frequent and familiar converse. *That* belonged to a state which soon passed away, and of which we know little more than this—that it once existed. But we have to contemplate the Divine conduct in a subsequent and far different state—a state which was commenced by an act of disobedience and rebellion against God—a state in which man has outraged every attribute of the Divine character, in which he has lost all love and likeness to God, and has joined in league with his enemies; in which the prevailing habit of his mind is that of enmity against God; and a state, therefore, in which his holy and insulted Maker might justly have left him to perish, and have withdrawn and enclosed himself for ever within the depths of his everlasting dwelling-place.

Now it was towards man in this state that the Almighty took the first step in his career of condescen-

sion, *by speaking to him.* He broke the fearful silence which sin had produced, and which might have lasted for ever, and spoke to us. And every accent he uttered was an accent of love. For the sentence which consigned our bodies to the stroke of death was only the application of what had been *previously* threatened; while every *additional* word was intended to mitigate that doom, by inspiring us with the hope of being finally delivered from it. And having broken the silence, he proceeded to address us at sundry times and in divers manners. He prescribed the way by which we might hope to regain his favour; he added promise after promise to encourage our obedience; and though it did not comport with the majesty of his holiness to maintain, as before, familiar intercourse with our polluted race, yet every time he spoke to us he opened a fresh view of his excellence, and furnished an additional proof of his condescension.

Another stage in his divine condescension to man was, when he appointed a place for the symbol of his presence to dwell in, and where man might be always welcome to approach and commune with him. That PRESENCE, indeed, was concealed from the public eye, and could be approached only in a prescribed manner. But still it was a vast advance in the Divine condescension: it seemed to say that his benignity knew no limits; it seemed to place earth in close proximity to heaven. When Solomon offered up the first prayer at the dedication of that hallowed edifice, he appears to have been almost overwhelmed with the idea:—"Will God," said he, "in very deed dwell with man upon the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, how much less this house which I have built!" Will the Divine Omnipresence take up his dwelling here? Is not the expectation too great to be realized? Will he do so "in very deed?" To this appeal of his servant, which showed a mind labouring and staggering under the amazing conception, the Almighty replied, "I have chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there for ever; and mine

eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually." And through a long succession of ages he continued to meet with his people there, and to commune with them from off the mercy-seat.

But all this—astonishing as it was—was only preliminary. The next stage in the condescension of God to man threw all its past history into the shade. The "WORD" himself became flesh and dwelt among us. Great, indeed, is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest "*in the flesh*"—came and tabernacled among us in our own nature. By a mysterious act he took our nature into union with his own, and actually walked the earth, conversed with us, instructed us, pitied and wept over us, by all the arts of a divine compassion commended his love to us. This was a stoop of condescension immeasurably deep. Beyond *this* (we might have said) he cannot go—even *he* cannot go. He has now reached the lowest point to which he can descend, for he has reached the low basement of earth, he has placed himself on a perfect level with ourselves. We have now seen the utmost limits of his condescending grace.

"But my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." Look at that cross—at Him who hangs upon it. Look at that bleeding form—that *is* a lower point of condescension. He is *dying*—dying for *us*—dying for us *the accursed death of the cross*. "He was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." *That* was, indeed, the lowest point to which he could descend. The sun shrunk back, amazed at that sight; angels hung over it perplexed, unable to comprehend it. All nature sympathized and wondered. And shall we, for whom all this voluntary humiliation was endured, be the only beings who are unmoved by it?

Let us glance at the ground over which we have passed. We have seen that man had reduced himself to the condition of an enemy against God; and that with this condition he was in love, when God, who is rich in mercy, resumed the intercourse which sin had interrupted, by speaking to him. This was the commencing act of his condescension—and it was amazing. When any thing of a similar kind takes place among men—when a party injured is known to have spoken first to the party which injured him, especially too if he be his superior in rank—the act is spoken of with unfeigned admiration. But that the Creator should have thus acted towards his creature—that the infinite God should have first spoken, and have spoken amicably, to the poor, alienated, debased children of men, surpasses unspeakably the utmost condescension which man can show to his fellow-man. And still more, that he should appoint a place for his presence to dwell in, where we might go and commune with him; that he should hide from our sight the glories of his throne, lest they should overwhelm our feeble spirits; that he should conceal from us the ministries of his celestial court, and, dismissing that train which filleth the temple above, should stoop to visit the lowly abodes of those that fear him, and dwell as a Father in the homes of earth—this was a lower stage in his condescension still. That he should have left the high and holy place which he had inhabited from eternity, and have assumed the nature of his creature man, and have become a resident on earth, was another and a far lower stage in his condescension still. But that while here he should have submitted to suffer death—"the death of the cross"—by the hand of those he came to redeem—was a depth of condescension never before imagined, never after to be surpassed. If he humbles himself when he only deigns "to behold the things that are in heaven and earth," then what shall we say of his condescension in becoming flesh, and dying for us? It is the everlasting wonder of the universe.

DIVINE CONDESCENSION, HUMAN EXALTATION.

THE condescension of God, as already traced in its downward stages, was not ostentation and display. It could not fail to be productive of certain effects; for as surely as the natural operation of his justice would have tended to destroy, so certainly the operation of his love would have a tendency to save. And it could not be otherwise than that these restorative effects should be commensurate with the *degree* of condescension which he exercised; they would correspond in measure as well as in kind. Accordingly, we find that this exact correspondence obtains: He stooped to earth that we might be raised to heaven; he partook of our human nature that we might be made partakers of his *divine;* he died an ignominious death that we might live a glorified and eternal life.

In glancing at the pinnacle of distinction to which man is raised, let us mark two or three of the more elevated stages in the ascending scale. The lowest to which we shall allude is that of a servant of the most high God. From being the slaves of sin, he advances us into his high and holy service. He has no *need* of our services, for he is self-sufficient, and could accomplish every thing by the word of his power; or if he chose to surround himself with obedient servants, as a thing becoming his majesty and state, he might have taken them all from the inhabitants of the heavenly world.* *They* have never revolted from him, never

* If the writer mistake not, there is a passage somewhere in the celebrated Howe's works, the scope of which bears a resemblance to this paragraph.

abused his goodness, nor renounced his authority, as we have done; but have ever counted it their highest honour to adore and serve him. How astonishing is it, then, that he should come to seek for servants in this sinful world! that he should call any into his service from among our apostate and guilty race! And yet he does this; and he does it in a manner as though he were really dependent on our services, as though he were unable to conduct the affairs of his government without us; for he not only calls us, he urges, and entreats, and even offers to reward us, though we can never be otherwise than unprofitable servants. If we neglect his first invitations he repeats them; if we faint in his service he supports and encourages us; if we revolt from his service he actually follows and brings us back to it again; he stoops to do that which we should count it a degradation to do to our fellow-creatures. He reminds us that angels are our fellow-servants; he calls us co-workers together with himself; he even engages to applaud us at last in the face of the universe, by saying, "Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

But if it be an honour to be advanced into the *service* of God, how surpassing the distinction of being raised into his *friendship!* And yet this is his language, "Ye are my friends; henceforth I call you not servants, but friends." Had he only regarded his people in the light of his servants, he would only have laid his commands upon them; and even this would have been conferring on them an honour which angels are emulous and happy to enjoy. But he not only entrusts them with his commands, he shares with them his secrets, and honours them with his confidence. He gives them the utmost freedom of access to him, permitting them to come even to his seat, and to enter the secret of his pavilion. They share his sympathy, his counsel, and his aid; and in return, they feel a growing congeniality with his character, make his cause their own, and rejoice when it is promoted, as though their own interests were advanced. They

are conscious of a holy jealousy for the honour of his name, as if it were committed entirely to their custody, or as if their own life and happiness were bound up with it. O how exalted and how ennobling is this relation to God! and yet it is their privilege to sustain it: they are known in heaven, though they may not be on earth, as the *friends of God.*

But they sustain a relation still higher, if possible, than this: "Beloved," says an apostle, "now are we the *sons* of God." "Ye are all the *children* of God," says another apostle, "by faith in Christ Jesus." "And if children, then *heirs;* heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." "O," said one of the Malabarian converts appointed by the Danish missionaries to translate a catechism, in which believers are called the "sons" of God,—"O it is too much! let me rather render it, 'they shall be permitted to kiss his feet.'" But no, it is not too much: "It is just like him," said a converted negro woman, with sublime moral simplicity, when speaking of his unutterable gift of Christ for our redemption. Inconceivably great as the gift is, "it is just like him;" and unspeakably great as the privilege is of constituting believers his children, "it is just like him;" it is no figment of the imagination; the honour is realized to the fullest extent. They are renewed after his likeness, and by the special operation of his own Spirit. They are clothed with the robes of his righteousness; are sustained with manna from heaven, and enjoy the training and tuition of a Divine teacher; while every step they take brings them nearer to an inheritance worthy of those whom he has adopted as his children and his heirs. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God;" and when we look down to the depth from which he has raised us, we may well be astonished at the height of our present elevation; but when we look up towards the summits which we are yet destined to attain, we feel that "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Great as the honour is which he has already conferred upon us, it is only the beginning, the pledge of what he purposes

to bestow on us in heaven. High as is the exaltation to which he has already raised us, we are still rising, and shall continue to ascend, till we have left sin, and death, and hell at an infinite depth below us, and find ourselves placed at the right hand of God.

Now, looking at the history of this exaltation, we may remark that, like that Divine condescension to which it is owing, it is marked by distinct and successive stages, by which the Christian is carried from glory to glory till he has reached the summit of perfect bliss. What an important moment in his history is that, when the voice of God first calls him, and induces him to consider his ways. The period of conversion comes, and he arrives at another stage: he now cordially believes, and embraces the Gospel; his sins are forgiven; he draws the first breath of a new life, and aims at heaven. Henceforth, his course may be marked by numerous vicissitudes—but they all form so many steps, by which he rises towards heaven. The period of death comes, and he arrives at another and a most important point—he escapes from the state in which he had been walking by faith, and finds himself standing in the brightness of the throne of God; he quits his conflicts and temptations, and finds himself in a world where all is security, holiness, and bliss; he rises as by one mighty bound from earth to heaven. Nor is this the summit of his dignity. The morning of the resurrection will dawn, and he will reach a higher point of glory still. His body will be raised from the low chambers of the grave, and be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. The hour of judgment will arrive, and constitute another stage in his advancing career; he will then be acquitted from every charge, welcomed as an heir of heaven, and confirmed in his title to eternal life. And do you think that even then he will have reached the limits of his glory? That glory is an ocean—and he will only then be just launched forth on its shoreless expanse. Even then he will be heard saying, as he surveys the interminable

prospect of blessedness that stretches before him, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but this we know, that we are like him, for now we see him as he is;" and this we believe, that in proportion to the depth to which he stooped in order to raise us, in that proportion will be the height of our exaltation, for ever advancing in endless progression.

To this advanced stage of their exaltation, however, Christians have not yet attained. Some of them are only just emerging into spiritual light and life; others are in the midst of their career toward heaven; others have just arrived at the point at which their spirits pass to the throne of God; and others have long been familiar with the scenes and the society of heaven. Were the operation of the grace of God to terminate at this moment, were the affairs of his kingdom to be wound up at once, how astonishing the effects which his condescension has already produced! How many has it raised to the enjoyment of eternal life! What a tide of happiness has it poured through the world—bearing on its bosom to the haven of rest an innumerable multitude, every one of whom would else have perished in the blackness of darkness for ever! But it shall not cease to operate till it has compassed the salvation of all his people; and then, and not till then, will it be adequately appreciated and adored. But then, when all the objects of his love—the fruits of his condescension—shall stand upon the mount of God; when they shall look up and gaze upon the glories of him who sits upon the throne, and then look back, and down upon the cross, and remember that he once hung upon it, and trace the various stages through which he passed till he reached it, what an amazing impression of his condescension will they have, and what a theme for praise. And when they shall contrast their divine exaltation with their former depression, when they shall find that they are without fault before the throne of God, that they are walking in the society of angels, are raised to the enjoyment of all that heaven con-

tains, and then look down at the state in which his condescension found them, and, still lower, at the state of perdition from which his grace has saved them, what a view will they have of their high exaltation, and what a subject for gratitude to him "who raiseth up the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set him with princes," even the princes of heaven.

But the adoration and praise of heaven must begin on earth. Christians are not strangers to these emotions now. It is by these, and the influence which these have upon their life, that they are distinguished from an ungodly world. The Saviour has spoken to them—and they have listened, wondered, and obeyed. He has raised them from the dust, and they have followed him. He has shown them his cross, and they feel that they are not their own. He has pointed them to the open gate of heaven, and they are hastening and ascending to reach it. He has constituted them his friends and his children, and they are advancing to take possession of their inheritance, and to share his glory.

A SEASONABLE RECOLLECTION.

"Remember Jesus Christ."

Memory, like every other endowment, becomes valuable only as it is properly employed. In this world we are comparatively unable to appreciate its worth. Here, at most, it has only the range of a few short years, a large proportion of the history of which does not *deserve* remembrance. It is a capacity which increases in importance as the history of our being advances. What a source of pleasure must memory be to a pure and happy being, who, by its aid, can call up the events which have given interest to ten thousand years! But it may be turned to the highest account even here. It is a casket; and if it contain "the pearl of great price," it is sacred, it is rich indeed.

In the present state our memory is weak and incapacious, unable to contain but a small portion of the innumerable objects which claim a place in it. The part of wisdom, therefore, is to examine and select what should obtain the first admission, and occupy the most prominent place in it; that, as all cannot be remembered, trifles at least may not be received to the exclusion of important objects. Let such an examination be instituted, and, before and above all things, we shall *remember Jesus Christ.*

He deserves to be remembered for the moral splendour of his achievements, in vanquishing all the enemies of human happiness; for his unmerited kindness in remembering us in our low estate; for the strength and endurance of his love, in continuing his regard for us unabated, notwithstanding the slights he receives

at our hands, and notwithstanding his own personal removal and exaltation and for the reward of grace which he promises to our remembrance of Him. They that remember Him, he will remember. And, oh! to be remembered by Him would amply compensate for being forgotten by all the universe besides! The dying malefactor only asked the Redeemer to remember him; and his humble request was answered with an assurance that, on that day he should be with Him in paradise.

Our remembrance of Christ must not be confined to the Sabbath, or the hour of prayer, or the day of death, when no aid but his can avail us. This would denote no great attachment to him; this would be remembering him only when we could scarcely forbear doing it—when even they that hate him remember him.

Many would have us think about them, only when we ourselves are in prosperity. If we are in want, they would be pleased to find that we had forgotten them, lest we should importune or disgrace them. Not so Jesus Christ; he is pleased when our trials induce us to remember him: then it is that they answer their appointed end. In the hour of conscious guilt, his language is—"Remember my grace; it will prevent despondency, and inspire you with hope." In the time of affliction—"Remember my sympathy, it will heal the wounds of the heart." In the season of duty—"Remember my example; like a guiding column of light, it will direct your course, and quicken your progress." In the prospect of death—"Remember that your 'Redeemer liveth,' and it will convert the chamber of sickness into the gate of heaven."

It is not easy for a man entirely to banish the Saviour from his recollections. Moving, as we are, in a world whose moral history is blended so intimately with the history of Christ, whose happiness depends on his mediation, and whose destiny will be determined at his tribunal, we are surrounded by intimations of his character and presence: and lest we should forget

him, he has written his name more or less legibly on every object in the moral world—has left us, in a variety of forms, and in every direction, memorials of his merciful relations to us. Be it understood, however, that to remember him aright involves the noblest efforts of the human mind. The exercise is at once so easy, that it invites compliance; so arduous, that it demands supreme attention; and so indispensable, that to neglect it is to perish. It originates in a scriptural acquaintance with his character, and a devout affection for him; it implies our deepest sympathy with all that is pure and lofty; it renders us conversant with the beings and pursuits of another world. To remember him aright is to remember his promises, and believe them—his commands, and obey them—his glory, and to make it the object of our life.

There must be an intenseness in our recollections of him, which will not merely place him on an equality in our thoughts with other endeared objects, but which must give him a superiority above them all;—a remembrance which will yield us pleasure, which we shall often be disposed to indulge in as our highest gratification, and which, instead of readily giving way to other recollections, *will* keep its place in the mind, notwithstanding all the importunate solicitations of earthly objects. If we are not aiming at such a remembrance of Christ, we are recollecting him only as a being who deserves to be forgotten; but thus to remember him will impart a Divine character to a human mind—will make a sinful man a partaker of the Divine nature.

It has been said that a thought is valuable in proportion to the number of other thoughts which it naturally suggests. Then how valuable is the scriptural recollection of Christ! connected as he is with the past, the present, and the future, with all that is pure and spiritual, benevolent and great. In the universe, the Christian possesses in him a memorial and representative of all that is worth remembering; while, on the other hand, every thought suggested by the con-

templation of those objects may, in its turn, become the means of recalling the Saviour to his mind; and thus there will be an established connexion maintained in the mind between Christ and all that deserves to be associated with him. There will be a system of holy thoughts and recollections, of which Christ will be the centre and the soul: thoughts which at one time might have passed through the mind without being detained or cherished, will now find a welcome and a home; and will find it, simply because they bear a relation to him.

We listen with pleasure to the man who can give us the least information concerning a dear and distant friend; and every incident relative to Christ will be welcome to the heart which enshrines him. Could we look into the memory thus consecrated, and survey the interior imagery, we might trace with ease innumerable associations sacred to him, mingled, indeed, with some of an unhallowed kind; for even the temple itself was not unvisited by idols,

> "Who durst fix their seats next the seat of God,
> Their altar by his altar; yea, often placed
> Within his sanctuary itself their shrines,
> Abominations!"

But such sacrilegious thoughts will not find a welcome, or effect a lodgment, in a heart which is thus sacred to him. And this suggests the importance of vivid as well as frequent recollections of Christ. If they cease to be vivid, they cease to exert a practical influence. They mingle and pass through his mind with other thoughts; but, instead of controlling the man, they are controlled by him; instead of imparting a religious character to his mind, his mind imparts to them its own worldliness. This is the secret of the religious declension of many Christians from what the Scriptures designate their "first love." Instead of remembering *him*, they come to be satisfied with merely remembering *past recollections* of him.

It is, no doubt, strange in the estimation of the

world, to insist on the paramount importance of habitually remembering a Being so far removed beyond the range of our natural sympathies and associations. So, under the former economy, the heathens were at a loss to conceive what could be the object of the Jewish worship, since the temple contained no *image* of a god; and when at last, on the conquest of Jerusalem, they rushed into the "Holy of Holies," they exclaimed with amazement, that *there was no God!* We admit the difficulty of remembering an unseen Saviour, but affirm its practicability, and urge its importance, and exult in the pleasure which its performance involves.

If we desire to cherish the recollection of a distant friend, in order to prevent the possibility of long forgetting him, how often do we carry about with us some memento to awaken recollections of him! Now, though the Christian does not stand in need of such assistance, yet whatever is calculated to bring the Saviour properly before us should not be despised. There should be such a sensitiveness of feeling cultivated towards him, that every thing we hear and see should have a tendency to remind us of him. Our sacred mental associations should be so multiplied, that nothing could claim our attention without directly or indirectly leading us to him; that no train of thought could be excited within us, without terminating in thoughts of him; that as the magnetic needle turns in the direction of the pole, so, whatever our situation, our hearts, being imbued with his love, might spontaneously and habitually turn to him.

Pointing to his sacramental ordinance, he enjoins, "Do this in remembrance of me." The Christian should do every thing in remembrance of Christ, and thus convert life into one sacramental feast.

THE TRUE KINDRED OF CHRIST.

To HAVE seen a place or a person of eminence, is a circumstance on which we are accustomed to reflect with pleasure, and which we relate to others who have not enjoyed the gratification, with a feeling of superiority. Had we seen the Son of God—had we traced the features of his heavenly countenance—had we listened to the kind and encouraging tones of his voice—had we heard him addressing the astonished and delighted multitude—seen him healing the sick, comforting the distressed, and raising the dead—had we gazed on his sacred person after his own resurrection from the dead—how often should we have been heard reverting to the fact—reverting to it as the most interesting part of our history—and perhaps claiming to ourselves a degree of credit and authority on account of it. Thus, when the apostle Peter was exhorting the elders of the Christian church, he claimed to be heard, not only because he himself was an elder, but also because he had been "a witness of the sufferings of Christ." And our Lord himself declares that, in the last day, many will claim admission into heaven, partly because they have eaten and drunk in his presence, and had seen him teach in their streets.

Had we not only seen him, but had we been also on terms of friendship with him—had he taken us with him when he left the multitude, and explained to us his public discourses, and admitted us to familiar intercourse, and even permitted us to recline on his bosom, how distinguished would have been the honour, and how many would have envied us its possession.

But still more—had we been related to Christ according to the flesh, how much greater the distinction

still. Many employ their time and their wealth in tracing back their pedigree to the great and mighty of the earth; they value an exalted ancestry even more than an honourable character; and if they can but establish a remote and doubtful alliance to it, they make it their boast and their glory. But if it be an honour to be allied to any earthly dignity—to any one to whom man has given a title—then who can estimate the distinction of being related to Him who is the great fountain of all the honour and authority in the universe? If it be an honour to be related to the wise—in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; every sentence he uttered was a revelation; and he has given to us the key of the knowledge which opens heaven and leads to eternal life. If it be an honour to be allied to the rich—he is the heir of all things:—or to be related to the conquerors of the earth—he is the conqueror of sin, and death, and hell. And hence the apostle Paul, when enumerating the peculiar distinctions of the Jewish nation, describes it as one, that Christ was born of it: "Whose are the fathers; and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever."

But, on a certain occasion, the Saviour declared that there is an honour greater than that of having seen him —of having been admitted to occasional intercourse with him—or of even having been related to him by the ties of human consanguinity—namely, the honour of a spiritual relationship. The union to him which originates in faith, is cemented by love, and which leads to a life of holy obedience, is an honour which swallows up every other distinction, and which puts the believer into the possession of all he can desire or enjoy. "Jesus stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of my Father, who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Here, our Lord describes *the man who is most nearly related to him.* When a person of property dies in-

testate, it is considered a point of great importance to determine who is the nearest of kin—who has the first and the strongest claim to the property of the deceased. But the question here pending is,—who is the most nearly related to Christ? because to him devolves spiritual wealth and honours beyond all computation. Guided by the language we have just quoted, the question admits of an easy solution. The happy individual may be found in a palace, or in a hovel—pining in poverty, or rolling in affluence—lying in the depths of obscurity, or standing on the pinnacle of fame—destitute of learning, or sitting in the chair of philosophy and wisdom; his ancestry, age, and external circumstances, are altogether unimportant;—but, wherever he is to be found, he is distinguished *by doing the will of God.* This is his *proprium*—his distinctive badge. He avails himself of every opportunity which he enjoys of learning that will. As far as he understands it, he loves it; and loves the Saviour for having revealed it. He is conscientiously earnest in obeying it, however humbling the doctrines which it requires him to believe, and however difficult the duties which it calls him to perform; he counts its his meat to do the will of his Father who is in heaven. He knows no other rule to walk by than the word of God—no other end to aim at than the glory of God. And, this being his character, he is related to Christ. He is moving in a line with Christ; and tending, though not with equal steps, to the same celestial goal. He has been born into the same family—partakes of the same spiritual nature—and, as an heir of God, he is said to be a joint-heir with Christ. However obscure, therefore, the station he may occupy—whatever the country which gave him birth—and whatever the circumstances which may combine to depress him—all such considerations are merged and lost sight of in that greatest of all distinctions, that *he does the will of God*;—while the Saviour extends his hands towards him, and says, *Behold my mother, and sister, and brother.*

Here, too, we learn *the superiority of this relation-*

ship to Christ to every other. It is more *vital;*—by which we mean, that it is more essential to our spiritual life than our natural ties are to our natural life. The rupture of the latter we may survive; but Christ is our life, and were it possible for the ties which bind us to him to be broken asunder—though we might live on as men, as Christians we should perish.

It is more *dignified* than any earthly relationship. It allies us to the throne of God—to the royalty of heaven—to dignities which will survive the wreck of all things earthly, and live on when time shall be no more. By our kindred to him, our weakness becomes linked to Almighty strength, and our exigence to Divine all-sufficiency. We become entitled to share in all his possessions and glories.

This union is more *tender* than any earthly connexion. The language of Christ on this point is remarkable; he does not say, "the same is my brother, *or* sister, *or* mother;" but, "the same is my brother, *and* sister, *and* mother. He is bound to me by a tie so tender and intimate, that it includes all relations in one. I feel for my obedient followers all the tenderness due to a mother—all the kindness and generous regard a man would feel towards his own sister—and all the faithful friendship due to an affectionate brother." Whatever there is peculiar in the affection or regard of the different endeared relations of life, all centres in the love of Jesus to his sincere disciples.

And this union is more *enduring* than any earthly connexion. Mere human relationships are daily breaking up. Whole families, with every branch belonging to them, have entirely disappeared. How probable is it that the family from which our Lord himself descended, in his human nature, is now entirely extinct. But the relation which subsisted between him and his primitive disciples is not extinct: he can now point them out in the ranks of the blessed above, and say, *Behold my mother and my brethren.* And when every earthly tie shall be dissolved—when he shall come to receive his people to himself—he declares that he

will recognize and acknowledge them all as his brethren, his true and only kindred: for he will say to such as have cherished a benevolent and fraternal spirit towards his followers, "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of *these my brethren*, ye did it unto me." He will look around on the assembled world, as he once did on his assembled hearers, and, extending his hand towards them, will draw on them the admiring regards of the universe, by saying, *Behold my mother and my brethren.* And, oh, who would not in that day gladly disclaim relationship to the noble and mighty of the earth, rather than be destitute of relationship to Christ! Who among the proudest and the loftiest will not then wish that he had claimed kindred with the dust which he almost disdained to tread—that he had said "to corruption, 'Thou art my mother,' and to the worm, 'Thou art my sister'"—rather than be destitute of relationship to Christ? Who among the dispisers and persecutors of the saints will not deplore their folly, and envy the faithful the relationship which binds them to Christ? Every other connexion will then have melted away before the fires of the last day—the golden chain which binds his people to himself will be the only remaining bond—and that shall remain for ever; for, saith he, "because I live, ye shall live also."

How utterly insufficient is every other relationship to Christ than that which arises from faith, and love, and holy obedience! How little has it availed the Jews that they are related to Christ by the ties of country: and as little will it avail them in the last day, when the nations shall be seen coming from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, to sit down with the patriarchs in the kingdom of God, and they themselves shall be cast out. How little will it avail those who enjoyed the personal ministry of Christ—or those who performed miracles in his name—to plead their peculiar privileges, when he shall say to them, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you." And as useless will it be for one

nominal Christian to plead that he occupied a high station in the church—and another that he maintained a profession of religion—and a third that he was born of a pious ancestry—and a fourth that he gave even his body to be burned as a martyr to religion. If they were not his humble and sincere followers, he would say to each of them, as the Almighty is represented saying of one of old, "Though this man were the signet on my right hand, I would pluck him off and cast him away." The salvation of our Lord's brethren—the salvation of the virgin mother herself—arose not from the alliance of blood, but from sincerely believing in his name. Nothing, nothing short of a Divine and scriptural relationship to Christ will ever entitle us to the joys of heaven. But, possessed of this, let the Christian rejoice in the assurance that the hand which unites every other bond, shall only draw the principle which binds him to Christ closer than ever, and render it indissoluble.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.
JAMES.

ALL who have made pretensions to religion, have uniformly assigned a distinguished place to the exercise and efficacy of prayer; and even they who have practically renounced religion, are generally found, in the hour of suffering or danger, to make an involuntary effort to call on the name of the Lord. The voice of nature, at such periods, overpowering the prejudice of irreligion, which had hitherto silenced it, asserts the presence, the power, and the goodness of God, and invokes his favourable interposition. But the Christian, taught by that Being who is at once the great Object and Spirit of prayer, avails himself of this holy exercise as of the richest privilege; not that he is always equally disposed to engage in it, but, having acquired this habit, and enjoyed the advantage of prayer, he can never allow himself to regard it merely in the light of an arbitrary duty, dangerous to be neglected, and, therefore, necessary to be performed. It is his meat and his drink, the aliment which sustains and invigorates his spiritual life; he values it as the only channel of communication with his unseen and almighty Friend; he regards it as the instrument which allies his weakness to the power of God, and his emptiness and unworthiness to the grace that is in Christ Jesus. The Scriptures reveal the character of a Being who is infinite in wisdom, unchangeable in truth, and unlimited in power and benevolence. Prayer allies the believer to all these perfections, and makes them all virtually his own. They lay open to his view the economy of redemption, with all its blessings of pardon, adoption,

and complete preparation for heaven. By prayer, the believer appropriates all these blessings to himself; they tell him of a world where all is pure, and glorious, and happy; he prays, and becomes entitled to it, prepared for it, and soon receives the call to enter on its richest joys.

Nor is the efficacy of prayer confined to the believer himself: it places him in a new relation to all around him. He was needy and helpless, and unable to take a single step toward the accomplishment of his own salvation; but having acquired the habit of prayer, he can contribute largely toward the salvation of others. It is an invisible cord by which he can draw them toward heaven; it invests him with an indefinite power over the destiny and happiness of the world at large.

It is of intercessory prayer that the apostle speaks—"confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." And having illustrated the truth of this declaration, by referring to the prayers of Elijah, he concludes the epistle by saying, "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he who converteth the sinner from the error of his ways shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins;" thus intimating that the salvation of a sinner, and even of an apostate, the most hopeless of sinners, is quite within the limits of prayer, and may be effected by it.

The text describes the character and efficacy of genuine prayer.

It describes the character of prayer. It is inwrought by the energy of the Spirit. This is a characteristic of prayer suggested by the text; and most abundantly is it confirmed by the universal experience of believers and the testimony of the word of God:—"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we shall pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groaning that cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he

maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

He makes the believer a temple of the Lord, and graciously takes upon himself the office of conducting the worship of this temple; he becomes the High-priest and Intercessor; he prepares and presents to God the welcome sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart; he calls the affections and desires of the soul away from the world, and brings them, like a company of humble worshippers, to the throne of God, and constrains all that is within the soul to bless his holy name. He regulates and purifies the affections and desires; so that, when the believer gives utterance to them, the almighty Father regards them as the urgent desires of his own Spirit. Or should the believer be unable to give full utterance to his desires; should he only be able to express them in sighs, and tears, and groans, he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit; he that is always looking into the hearts of men, detecting all that is evil, and discerning and approving all that is good,—he knows, from the peculiar state of the mind, though no intelligible words have been uttered, that his Spirit has been operating there; he reads every thought, understands every desire, and recognizes, with perfect ease, that these thoughts and desires are the well known operations of his Spirit; they perfectly coincide with his own divine will, and he therefore gratifies these desires and fulfils his own will at the same time. Now it is only the utterance of such desires that can be regarded as genuine prayer; it is only such as have been excited and presented by the great Intercessor within us, that the Almighty does or can regard. These alone, as they arise from a sense of need, and of the magnitude of the blessings sought, will be expressed and urged with becoming earnestness. We are naturally in the condition of Elijah when his altar and offering were immersed in water; the fire of heaven must descend, or we shall thus remain immersed.

It is only in proportion as the Spirit puts forth his

energy within us, that we put forth our energy at the throne of grace, and present the inwrought fervent prayer of a righteous man.

When the apostle declares that the prayer of this description availeth much, he states the efficacy of prayer. Like every other means, prayer depends, for its efficacy, on the sovereign appointment of God; but in the whole compass of divinely appointed means, prayer occupies the highest place, and possesses the mightiest efficacy. Passing by all inferior objects, all created agency, it makes a direct appeal to the throne of God; and it appeals to him in a manner and through a medium which has never failed—in the name and for the sake of his only begotten Son. It enables the believer to take hold of his almighty strength; it identifies him with the Almighty; and so closely indentifies him, that the voice of God declares, "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye:" it gives him immediate access to the treasury of the divine benevolence, so that, even in this world of danger and sin, he can not only ward off and suspend around him every evil, but he can encompass himself with every good, as though he possessed an omnipotent charm; he can create around him an atmosphere of joy and happiness; it gives him access to the armoury of God, and to all his resources of strength; so that, like the angel who had the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand, he can fetter the operations and restrain the power of the prince of darkness, or he can enter the field of conflict and overpower him. It has been said that the smallest pebble cannot be thrown into the sea from our shores without producing *some* effect on the other side of the great Atlantic; but without waiting to examine the correctness of this assertion, it is only sober and undeniable truth to assert, that the humblest Christian cannot offer a single breath in prayer, which does not reach the throne of God, and become productive of effects which spread through the universe. "If ye abide in me," said Jesus, "and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and

it shall be done unto you." Here is an unlimited promise; and it cannot be pleaded in faith without producing unlimited effects.

But the text directs our attention particularly to the *efficacy of intercessory prayer*. And here we are at once reminded of the numerous instances of its power, recorded, doubtless for our encouragement, in the word of God. Sodom and the cities of the plain are to be burnt from the face of the earth; but what is it which for a time delays their doom, and gives them, humanly speaking, a probability of escape? It is the intercession of Abraham pleading with God, that fifty, or forty, or thirty, or twenty, or, at least, that ten righteous men might be found there. The Israelites have made a molten image at the foot of the very mount on which the glory of God has descended. "And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and behold it is a stiff-necked people; now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, that I may consume them." And what could allay, at this fearful moment, the fierceness of his anger? What could restrain him from destroying them with the breath of his nostrils? The fervent, the impassioned intercession of Moses. It held back his uplifted arm; it changed the purpose of his heart; "and the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do to his people." Again they incurred his displeasure by their rebellious discontent; "and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them; and the people cried unto Moses, and, when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched."

Again they revolt, and murmur against the Lord; and he said unto Moses, "How long will this people provoke me? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation, and mightier than they." But again this intercessor prayed for them; and the Lord said, "I have pardoned them according to thy word." "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are; and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on

the earth for the space of three years and six months; and he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth fruit."

Prayer has suspended and controlled the elements and operations of nature; it has procured the ministry of angels; it has quenched the violence of fire that came forth from the Lord; it has arrested the progress of Almighty displeasure; like the great Object to whom it is addressed, it operates silently and unseen, but irresistibly and universally. It has proved its unlimited efficacy in turning the sinner from the error of his ways, and saving a soul from death. This is the greatest, the most glorious triumph which it can achieve. It has raised the dead in sin, and brought the light of heaven into the benighted soul, and subdued the enmity and hostility with which it was armed; it has arrested the sinner at the gates of hell, transformed him, and lifted him up to the joys of heaven; it has saved his soul from death: and who, that has not looked into the region of perdition, that has not felt the gnawing of the undying worm, and the raging of the quenchless fire, can tell the meaning of that expression? It has instrumentally raised him to the enjoyment of heaven: and who, that has not been caught up to the third heaven, and beheld the unveiled glory of the Lamb, and heard the hymnings of the blessed, and drank of the river of the water of life, can estimate fitly the import of that expression?

But this is not all that intercessory prayer could effect;—its full efficacy is unknown; for it has never been tried. Like the elements of nature, it contains a power which, if put forth to the utmost, would infallibly change the face of the earth: and the day is hastening on, when its efficacy shall be tried on a scale before unknown; for all flesh shall come to pray before the Lord; and it shall then be found, that to pray is to use the mightiest instrument for the conversion of the world.

Let us not be deterred from trying the efficacy of cessory prayer by the fear of failure. Our suc-

cess may not equal our desires; but let us impress it on our minds, that our prayer, if earnest and importunate, availeth much. It may not procure for the object of our solicitude the desired good; but it may avert from him numerous evils; and, if so, it *availeth much.* It may not avail him so soon as our impatience would dictate; but, finally, it will avail, and avail him much. It will avail him more than any other means or instrument we can employ in his behalf. Yes, let it encourage us to persevere in prayer, when we reflect that, of all the instruments with which God has entrusted us for the benefit of the world, prayer is incomparably the most efficacious. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much;" how much, the day of judgment alone can fully disclose.

CHRISTIANITY NO PERSECUTOR.

THE ecclesiastical bigotry and persecution by which the history of the Christian church is disgraced, constitutes the source whence the sceptic derives his strongest objection to Christianity, and forms, according to his insinuation, the sum and substance of its annals. Having gratuitously asserted, and ostentatiously displayed, the mild and tolerant nature of ancient heathenism, he places it in invidious contrast with the contentions and persecutions which from age to age have stained the Christian *name;* and then proclaims, as by sound of trumpet, the superior spirit of the former, and denounces the latter as a convicted criminal and a curse.

Now, as this is the chief, if not even the only point of superiority to the Gospel which the advocates of ancient polytheism claim for it, as the impression of its truth, by incessant repetition, is so general that even a Bacon is found unguardedly stating that "the quarrels and division about religion were evils unknown to the heathen," and as the supposed tendency of the Gospel to produce dissensions has created perhaps stronger prejudices against it than all the other cavils of infidelity combined, we propose to offer a few warning and corrective remarks.

1. Even allowing that the theory of the tolerant spirit of ancient heathenism had ever been carried into practice, it could not have been accounted a virtue. For if polytheism allowed the unlimited reception of new divinities, the admission of an additional god to the Olympian synod was not the tolerance of a new religion, but only a step towards the completion of that which already existed. Nor was there any more

ground for praise in such admission than there is in the church of Rome on the canonization of a saint, or in the official act of registering a birth.

2. But the plausible theory of the tolerant spirit of paganism is never known to have been realised in practice. The Athenians allowed no alteration whatever in the religion of their ancestors; and the lives of Æschylus, Anaxagoras, Diagoras, Protagoras, Prodicus, Socrates, and Alcibiades, decided that innovation in religion was death. The *holy or sacred wars* among the Grecian states—the sanguinary contests between the respective votaries of the different gods of Egypt—and the cruel extermination of the disciples of every other religion except that of Zoroaster, in Persia, conspire to prove that bigotry is peculiar to no clime, but is indigenous to our fallen nature. As to the vaunted toleration of the Roman government, we learn from Livy that about 430 years before Christ, orders were given to the Ædiles to see "that none except Roman gods were worshipped, nor in any other than the established forms:" and that about 200 years after this edict another was published, to crush certain rites which were obtaining in the city, and which enacted "that no one shall sacrifice on public or sacred ground after new or foreign rites." Indeed the same historian informs us, (b. xxxix. c. 16,) that it had been customary, in all the early ages of the republic, to empower the magistrates "to prevent all foreign worship, to expel its ministers from the forum, the circus, and the city, to search for and burn the religious books, and to abolish every form of sacrifice except the national and established form." Valerius Maximus confirms the testimony of Livy, and records the jealousy with which all foreign religions were prohibited by the Roman republic. Dio Cassius attests that the emperors pursued the same policy. Maximus earnestly exhorted Augustus "to hate and punish" all foreign religions, and to compel all men to conform to the national worship. Augustus and his successors literally obeyed the exhortation. Tiberius prohibited

the Egyptian worship, banished the Jews from Rome, and restrained the worship of the Druids in Gaul. Domitian and Vespasian banished the philosophers from Rome, some of whom were confined in the islands, and others put to death. From all of which it would appear that intolerance was an original law of Rome, that this law was never repealed, and that from time to time it was let loose on the professors of other religions with terrible effect. While the history of France, during the revolution, proclaims that hot as are the fires of persecution which Paganism has often kindled, Atheism has a furnace capable of being heated "seven times hotter;" that intolerance is inherent in our sinful nature.

3. Not only did persecution exist prior to the introduction of Christianity, it employed its utmost power for the extinction of the Gospel. "The dragon stood to devour the child as soon as it was born." The infant church was cradled in suffering; its champions were covered with the scars of conflict; its members dated from their persecutions. All the instruments of suffering were prepared—all the varied apparatus of torture and death were brought out and arrayed in its path to arrest its progress, and drive it from the earth. Philosophy, descending from that lofty contempt with which she had professed to view the early steps of the Gospel, joined hands with the pagan priesthood, and conferred on the church the unintentional honour of distinguishing it from all other "superstitions," by the superior activity of its deadly hate. Armed with the sword of the civil power, and marching under its banners, 300 years were spent in labouring to crush the Christian church. Yet, during all these ages of persecution, it does not appear that the emperors had occasion to enact any new penal laws. So amply was the ancient armoury of the Roman code stored with the weapons of persecution that they had only to select and to wield them at pleasure. Nor should it be forgotten that the bad pre-eminence of raising persecution from a law to a science was reserved for a pagan.

Julian it was who first taught the theory of persecution, and made it a branch of practical philosophy.

4. If Christianity has practised persecution, she learned the dreadful art from her own personal sufferings at the hands of her pagan tormentors. Long instructed in the maxims of intolerance, and accustomed to the spectacle of persecution, it was hardly possible that Christians should suddenly forget the lessons of their pagan oppressors, or support with perfect equanimity the sudden transition they experienced, from being treated as the "offscouring of all things," to becoming the lords of the world. But to the honour of the Christian name be it remembered, that universal toleration was first taught, and taught by one professedly Christian, even at the time of that transition. Constantine, whatever his motives, and however inconsistent his subsequent conduct, enacted, in his edict of Milan, universal toleration, protecting alike pagan and Christian ceremonies.

5. The greatest waste of human life has been occasioned, not by religion, true or false, but by causes purely political. What ancient empire was not founded in or cemented by blood? What but war fills the pages of ancient history? What do we know of Sesostris, but that he led out armies of above 700,000 men, and coloured the Mediterranean with blood? What do we know of Semiramis, but that she armed three millions for a single war with India, and conducted every other contest on the same gigantic scale? What do we know of the Assyrian, Median, and Persian monarchies, or of the Grecian and Roman states, but that each had, in every age, its own Aceldama, or field of blood?

"War," says Machiavel, "ought to be the only study of a prince." While Hobbes, judging from the past, imagines that war is the state of nature. "Political society," says Burke, "has slaughtered upwards of seventy times the number of souls this day on the globe." So that if the quarrels and bloodshed occasioned by a nominal Christianity is to be employed as

an argument against the Gospel, the greater evils arising from civil society supply a still stronger argument for returning to a state of savage nature.*

6. Many of the contentions, wars, and massacres professedly religious have, in their origin, been really and simply political. The crusades themselves, or, as they were called to serve a purpose, the holy wars, unquestionably originated, not in any reverence for the land they wasted, but in the rapacity and ambition of two of the most turbulent popes that ever filled the pontifical throne. And in the same way, the wars of the league, commonly ascribed to a religious origin, took their rise in the personal resentment and ambitious projects of the leaders of factions and the princes of the blood. Political causes having drawn the sword, a corrupt religion was only employed to poison its edge, that the wound inflicted might be the more difficult to heal.

7. All those persecutions and wars which have professedly originated in religious motives, have been undertaken in direct opposition to the spirit of the Gospel, and are denounced by it. Popery may have been to blame, human nature may have been to blame, (for every man has more or less of the *priest* in his heart, as far as that term is associated with the idea of bigotry,) but the Gospel never. So far from this, it proclaims "peace on earth, good-will towards men." To every individual who would draw a material sword in its defence, its language is, "Put up thy sword again into its place." And if the sword be not quickly sheathed, it flies from the place as from an uncongenial element; so that in every scene of intolerance, the presence of the Gospel has always been felt like a burden and a restraint. Nor was it till men had succeeded in forgetting or defying it, that persecution felt itself at full liberty to kindle its fires and indulge its hate; and often, alas! at such times, the Bible has been the first martyr cast into the flames.

* See that admirable piece of irony by Burke, "A Vindication of *Natural Society*."

8. In proportion as the Gospel triumphs, persecutions cease, and a spirit of forbearance and charity succeeds. To take the character of Christianity from its stagnant and corrupted form in the middle ages, is as inconsistent as to judge of the mountain stream of the Jordan from an analysis of the bituminous waters of the Dead Sea, in which they are lost. To judge of them fairly, they should be traced to their fountain, and examined in their purity. If ever benevolence was made visible in human form, it was in the person of the Divine Founder of Christianity. In accordance with these representations, excommunication was the earliest, and, for ages, the only weapon the church employed. Though burning with zeal against erroneous opinions, the apostolical fathers, like the apostles themselves, neither authorised nor hinted any severity on the persons of those opposed to them. The only panoply they wore was an armour of character; their only weapons, the love that attracts, the patience that endures, and the union that gives strength. The victories they achieved were all bloodless—the moral conquest of revolted minds. And now again, after Christianity has, for ages, been overlaid by the accumulated errors and oppressions of the world, it is rising and shaking the mountain weight from its giant breast, and resuming its celestial character. Unlike the Jordan, it is not only pure at its fountain, but is gradually purifying the element of corruption which had neutralised and absorbed it. Like the waters of prophetic vision,—its own appropriate type,—it is "going down into the desert and into the sea, to heal the waters. And it shall come to pass, that the waters shall be healed, and every thing shall live whither the river comes."

Wherever the light of the Gospel comes, the spectre of intolerance shrinks and retires from its presence, while the Divine principle of charity lifts up its head and feels reassured. The splendid hope which some entertain,—that the Gospel will ultimately unite the whole Christian church in every article of faith and

practice, in inward sentiment as well as in outward form,—is only, it is to be feared, a visionary scene; though the fact that it should be able to awaken such an expectation proclaims abroad its conciliatory spirit. There is, however, an union which its members pray for and its promises secure—an union of affection, which, linking heart to heart, shall leave the judgment free, and which, out of the varying tones of many minds, shall form an harmonious whole.

THE COMING SPRING.

I SING the spring:—

"The spring, the spring, the beautiful spring."

Whose heart does not leap up at the sound? It renews one's youth like the eagle's. It makes one feel all over wings; requiring weights and policemen, like the monster balloon, to keep one down. But the allusion reminds me of the murky town. *I* live in the *country:* what will the poor townites say to that? I know what they ought to say and to do; let them acknowledge my superiority, and take off their hats, and stand while I address them. Talk of classification! what division of the human race so simple, natural, and comprehensive, as that which distributes it into city-dwellers and country-dwellers? Do you require proof? "God made the country, and man made the town:"—there the point is settled. Even your poor town-dwellers have your anticipations of the coming spring—anticipations bright as a farthing rush-light in a fog; you expect your two or three stinted and imprisoned trees will find out, somehow or other, that the season of spring is at hand, and will try to look green. Hope is the evergreen, the perpetual spring of the heart—and you hope to hear your cockney sparrows give two chirps instead of one, and to see them fly by your windows with bits of string, in default of hay and straw; and you hope your poor coffined mignonette will smell as sweet "as can be expected;" and that your two or three sickly shrubs—which, though not dead, are decently buried—will still hold up their heads. And even the poor Esquimaux, at Wapping and thereabouts—with their arctic winter and polar fogs

—are no doubt beginning to hope; not that they expect to see more summer for the present, but a *little* less fog.

Oh! who does not love the country? It is a passion born with all; an element of our common nature, infused at the creation of the kind; a flame that lives on unextinguished even amidst the brick-and-mortar influence of town—

> "Where nothing feeds it; neither business, crowds,
> Nor habits of luxurious city-life,
> Whatever else they smother of true worth
> In human bosoms, quench it, nor abate.
> The villas with which London stands begirt,
> Like a swarth Indian, with his belt of beads,
> Prove it. A breath of unadulterated air,
> The glimpse of a green pasture, how they cheer
> The citizen, and brace his languid frame!
> Even in the stifling bosom of the town,
> A garden, in which nothing thrives, has charms
> That soothe the rich possessor; much consoled
> That here and there some sprigs of mournful mint,
> Of nightshade, or valerian, grace the well
> He cultivates. These serve him with a hint
> That nature lives."

Oh! who does not love the country? "We are here," says Cowley, in language more passionate than can any where be found in his passionless poetry, "we are here among the vast and noble scenes of nature; we are there among the pitiful shifts of policy: we work here in the light and open ways of the Divine bounty; we grope there in the dark and confused labyrinths of human malice: our senses are here feasted with the clear and genuine taste of their objects, which are all sophisticated there, and for the most part overwhelmed with their contraries: here is harmless and cheap plenty; there guilty and expensive luxury."

But what has this to do with the coming spring? What? why, is it not very introductory? and would you rush into the presence of such a subject without a formal introduction? With this preparation, then, we proceed. And, first, has it never struck you as a

thing to be wondered at, that of the five hundred and one essays, odes, sonnets, and verses written last year on the four seasons, just five hundred were devoted to them while current, or else celebrated their glories when they had passed away; and that only the odd one (and that a very odd one indeed, of which the least said the better,) looked forwards, and antedated the object of its regard? I propose to add another.

I have just been strolling abroad to refresh my vernal associations. It is true the landscape still wears a bald and wintery aspect; and a month, at least, must yet elapse before it will assume a much lovelier hue. But I need not wait till then, thought I, in order to enjoy a foretaste. The spring is even now invisibly at work in ten thousand times ten thousand ways. Nature, at this moment, is a vast laboratory, in which all her vital elements and divine essences are in process. The omnific word has gone forth,—"Let the face of the earth be renewed," and all the agents of the material universe (and many of the spiritual too, for aught we know) are busily obeying the fiat. Below the brown surface of that ploughed land there lives, and wakes, and works a sleepless principle, which is silently but irresistibly converting these clods into food, and life, and beauty. That bank is covered, at present, with nothing but grass, but he who has an ear to hear will hear, if he bends and listens, a sweet whispering below, between a violet, a daisy, and a wild primrose, about an annual visit which they have lately received, and which has put them all in the highest spirits. That old hawthorn looks dead, but not he! spring has touched his remotest and minutest fibres; his juices are already ascending, and every thing within him is saying—"only wait a little, and you shall see me one white impurpled shower of fragrant blossoms." In all her myriad ways Nature is abroad, reviving her works, shedding her perfumes, mingling her colours, breathing on her seeds, and calling her beautiful children to life. The very air owns it, and is balmy; the

soil feels it, and inhales the incense of gratitude; that cloud, so different from the clouds of winter, so soft and wreathy, and like the dew-filled fleece of Gideon, comes spring-loaded from the great Giver—one of the wishes of nature fulfilled. Only stand still, and listen; all is silent, the silence of hope, of assured expectation. The very birds, for the moment, are hushed; but it is only the hush of pleasing suspense; let the signal be given, and out they will burst into a glorious chorus. Did you note that slight rustle among the branches? was it not soft as the folding of angel-wings? It was nature breathing over her beauties.

But I need not tax imagination in order to see the spring. Already its outward and visible signs are every where around me. Yesterday morning, on visiting my garden, I descried that welcome messenger of spring, the *galanthus nivalis*, or snowdrop. There it lay "beneath its white coverlid, so pure and pale, so true an emblem of hope, and trust, and confidence, that it might teach a lesson to the desponding, and show the useless and inactive how invaluable are the stirrings of that energy that can work out its purpose in secret, and under oppression, and be ready in the fulness of time to make that purpose manifest and complete." A little further on, a group of hepaticas smiled to receive me; the fringed star of Bethlehem and the spring bulbocodium were trembling with delight—a crocus was looking like a whole spring in itself—a primrose spoke to the imagination of thatched cottages, and sloping banks, and woody dells, and happy children—and a violet, without holding up its head, spoke to the heart of modest retiring beauty, and the fragrance of virtue. Going forth again, in the open weather of the evening, I was greeted with other harbingers of spring—less lovely to the eye, indeed, than those which I have named, but far from unacceptable to the lover of nature—the grey slug, and the homely earthworm, and the bat, just awoke from its winter's sleep.

Before I left home this morning for my walk, a redbreast, which I have fed through the cold weather, came to my window, sang as merrily as a robin can—thanked me for all past favours—and said, as plainly as he could, that he was about to look out for a "better half." A tomtit and chaffinch were by and heard him, and signified that so good an example deserved to be followed. As to the sparrows, they have all paired, and are furnishing their houses. But what large bird is that winging its way on high, as if from the sea-coast? surely it is the curlew; then he is retiring from his winter haunt to his inland breeding-place. And, hark! the lyric sky-lark is aloft at heaven's gates, raining down a shower of music to the earth; and there bursts forth the song-thrush, singing "as if he would never grow old," and as if the six pure scarlet drops in his body were *elixir vitæ;* and there darts by a bee, humming as merrily as if all the world were a hive, or every thing in it flowers and honey.

Man of the city! dost thou not almost wish for a country calenture, that thou mightest taste the spring, if only by the force of a diseased imagination? Wilt thou not treat thy poor wheezing lungs with a little country air? Dost thou not long for "the key of the field?" Wouldst thou not give thy freedom of the city to be made free of the green paths,—

> "The haunts of deer,
> And sheep-walks populous with bleating lambs;
> And lanes, in which the primrose ere her time
> Peeps through the moss that clothes the hawthorn root?"

Will thy street-music compare with that music of the flock? or thy dancing dogs with the joyous gambols of those new-yeaned lambs? Hear what Milton saith on the subject: "In those vernal seasons of the year, when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and sullenness against nature not to go out and

see her riches, and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth." Dost thou not feel inclined to go forth at once? Is not the spring strong upon thee, and the sun shining in upon thy heart? Lift up thy voice, then, and sing of "the coming spring:"—

"Hail, bounteous spring, thou dost inspire
Mirth, and youth, and warm desire;
Woods and groves are of thy dressing,
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing.
Thus we salute thee with one early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long."

THE LEAF.

We all do fade as a leaf.—ISAIAH.

HAVE you never been struck, reader, by the evident resemblance between the various appearances of nature, and the various states of the human mind, as well as the successive stages of human life? If not, reflect on it, and you will find it interesting. We can easily conceive how the Divine Being might have created a perpetual variance between our condition and the state of nature around us. When he pronounced the earth accursed "for our sakes," he might have aggravated that curse, by surrounding us to a painful extent with immitigable sameness. He might have reduced the large variety of animal tribes to the few which we use for food; and have left us no quadruped to please us with its gambols—no insect to sport in the summer's sun—no birds to delight us with their flight and their song. He might have taken away all the beauty of the landscape, by commanding the hill to sink and the valley to rise to a perfect level—by sinking the torrent and the rivulet beneath the surface of the earth—and by substituting for the towering and luxuriant tree nothing but the thorn and the brier. And from this scene he might have commanded the moon and the stars to withdraw their light, and have permitted the sun to look upon it only through a cloud. And had the face of nature worn an aspect so dreary, *he* doubtless would have counted himself most happy, or rather least miserable, who could have secluded himself most effectually from beholding it. But so far from being surrounded by such a scene, paradise was not more adapted to man in his state of primeval

purity, than the present condition of nature corresponds with our altered circumstances.

We know not to what extent the fall of man affected the original constitution of nature. In the poetic eye of Milton,

> "Sky lowered, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops
> Wept at completing of the mortal sin
> Original."

But this, if more than poetically correct, was only a presage of approaching revolution. From the tenour of the curse, we learn that a material change, never to be revoked, immediately followed. Nor do we know the effects produced by the universal deluge, and by other convulsions of nature. But whatever they may have been, we find ourselves the passing inhabitants of a world where nature, animate and inanimate, seems to sympathize with out lot, to point out our duties, and to remind us of our end. Nature, in this light, is only a grand depository of means intended to promote the end of our being. It is a temple in which piety finds herself surrounded by a thousand emanations from the Supreme, and addressed by a thousand voices of warning and encouragement. The poet has drawn from it his most pathetic images—the moralist many of his best arguments and examples—and the prophet some of his most arousing monitions.

In exemplification of this fact, but without pretending to furnish an adequate idea of it, you may be reminded of a few of the more obvious illustrations of our condition with which nature abounds. How often is the restlessness of man compared to the constant agitation of the ocean; and the uncertainty of friendship, and of success in life, to the instability of that element. How beautifully does the setting of the unclouded sun illustrate the closing scene of the Christian's life; how friendly the calm and twilight of evening are to solitude and meditation; and how aptly the rage of a storm represents the frequent turbulence

of human passions. If life be compared to a day, it has its morning, its noon, its evening, and its night; and when compared with the year, it has its "flowering spring," its "summer's ardent strength," its

> "Sober Autumn fading into age;
> And pale concluding winter comes at last
> And shuts the scene."

No subject, however, has been more copiously illustrated, by comparisons drawn from nature, than the brevity and uncertainty of human life. The change continually passing upon every thing around us, can scarcely fail to remind even the most thoughtless that such, "in his best estate," is man. But it is an unwelcome subject to the majority of mankind, and often remanded, like Paul by Felix, until a more convenient season shall have arrived. It cannot, however, be dismissed at present on account of its unseasonableness, for scarcely can we walk out without being reminded of it by some striking emblem. The warmth of summer is gone, and the freshness of the grass. The tribes of insects have gradually disappeared, and those which Providence instructs to provide for the winter, have begun to live on the fruit of their industry. The trees have lost the beauty and luxuriance of their foliage; for while some of them are already left naked to the blast, the leaves which remain on the rest have become sere and yellow, and every breath of air diminishes their number. The birds are become silent, and the sun leaves us in darkness early in the day. Here then is a silent but an eloquent appeal to our hearts, and surely no one can be offended when nature itself becomes the instructor. Had we, by any possibility, been ignorant that all the preceding generations of men had died, and that the same event awaited us, who could go out and contemplate those images of desolation, without wondering whether a change would ever take place in our condition, answering to this change in the aspect of nature? But this

is not a subject of conjecture—we *know* that it is the lot of all, and nature only aims to remind us of it. We are too much disposed to act as though the winter of our life would never come. But nature addresses us in the tone of warning, and assures us that it will; and presents itself as an example. We are so far absorbed in the present concerns of life, that we are in extreme danger of forgetting what awaits us at the end. But, as if to prevent this fatal inattention, nature dies before our eyes. It prospectively celebrates our funeral; and while the funeral procession is passing before us, the voice of wisdom pronounces in solemn accents, "We all do fade as a leaf."

And is it so, reader?—Then act as though you believed it. And remember that the portion which awaits the Christian, when he has faded and fallen here, is "an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." His body too, like seed deposited in the earth, is eventually to burst into second life. It is designed to wear no earthly form, but to be "fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body." And at the same moment a new heaven and a new earth are to start into being likewise. Not more certainly will the present season give place to another spring, than the storms and vicissitudes of time will be succeeded by that glorious event. To secure that, the Saviour died; and to accelerate it, he lives, and reigns, and triumphs. It is that to which all the affairs of the universe are hourly tending. Then a summer shall flourish which shall know no winter; then the verdure shall never wither; and the blessed who enjoy it, freed from every thing which rendered them fading on earth, shall know no change but that of advancing "from glory to glory."

EGOTISM.

You may rely on it, reader, that nearly all the world, except you and I, are egotists; so that, by the bye, we ourselves must have had a very narrow escape. "But how is it, then," you inquire, "that so many pass for modest, unassuming men?" Why, it is simply thus: some men are much more accomplished egotists than others; they know when to attract notice by appearing to disregard it; when to change the first person singular into the second, and when to excite the surprise and concern of the sympathetic, by affecting an undue degree of self-dissatisfaction and self-severity. And some are much less egotistical than others. The principle of *egotiveness* is within them, but circumstances have prevented the development of the organ. And provided a man's propensity to self-exaltation be not very obtrusive, he is allowed, by a kind of common courtesy, to pass for a modest man. This is his premium for being what he is, and his bribe to remain so. He is but a pigmy compared with the giant egotists around him, and his reward is to pass unnoticed.

But look me out the man who appears most dispossessed of self, and transport him to some planet inhabited by beings guiltless of selfism, and you shall find that even he will prove to be an egotist in every world but his own. He was humble here only by comparison; but there, no one could doubt for a moment that he was of the earth—earthy. And why? because he would be always talking about *our* world, and the superiority of *our* habits and manners; and be disposed to take the lead in every planetary conversation;

and aiming to excite astonishment by recitals of the marvelous.

But you need not transport him to a distant planet for this purpose: try the experiment on a smaller scale; track him through two or three days of his earthly wanderings, and you will find that however unassuming he may appear in some circumstances, in others he can lay claim to all the privileges of a veteran egotist. Has he just terminated a journey rather longer than usual? Then hush: "I am Sir Oracle—let no dog bark." For one half hour, at least, he lays claim to your attention as the "leading article," though, perhaps, he has merely to relate, "how he went farther than he intended, and came safe home again." Has he been involved in a wordy war? Then he will astonish you with the point of his repartees, and with what "I said" to what "he said." But it is in his own family that his egotistical propensity is most conspicuous. And it must be acknowledged that here, if any where, it almost ceases to offend; here, indeed, it becomes almost amiable. He is, beyond dispute, the most important personage in the group; and his importance must be maintained. In the eyes of his children—those multiplications of himself—he is the strongest, the wisest, and the best of men. And in the heart of his *other self*, the dear idea of his superiority is enshrined till death. But this pleasing delusion, which seems almost necessary to domestic happiness, cannot be maintained without the occasional declension of *ego*. And let him egotize, reader; he offends neither you nor me. I envy him his auditors; and let him who would attempt to dissipate the grateful error be anathematized, and never allowed to graduate beyond a bachelor.

But who is not an egotist in his dreams? I cannot forbear venturing an opinion that even you, reader, though of so retiring a disposition while awake, and while your thoughts are under the eye of a vigilant judgment, no sooner lose yourself in the vagaries of a *dream*, than you become the hero of every scene

which your imagination portrays. You may dream of others; but then they are only admiring spectators of your exploits. You may quarrel; but your antagonist never fails to be worsted. The drama suddenly changes, and a new scene makes its appearance; but you are there in time to sustain the principal part. You dream of precipices, and of persons falling over them; but rather than be a mere spectator, you will fall from the highest point yourself. But this modification of egotism is excusable; you were beguiled into it during the absence of all mental control. If, indeed, as many do, you were accustomed to relate your dreams, then, perhaps——but away with the idea! it is not for a moment to be entertained.

It is said that an extra glass will occasionally transform a very reserved person into a most loquacious egotist, if into nothing worse;—that it has a strong tendency to revive the memory of personal adventures, respectable connexions, and rich relations. But however this may be, it must be allowed that a slight degree of personal deference, to say nothing of adulation, will frequently operate to this effect. When a man perceives that you know him, and that you regard him (perhaps justly) with marked and respectful attention, he feels that he has to support a certain character, and rather than sink in your estimation, he is in extreme danger of contracting the guilt of egotism. This will, in some measure, account for the fact why so many men of mental eminence are chargeable with the commission of this offence. For be it remembered, that whatever it may betray, it is a propensity by no means peculiar to mental imbecility. They have been placed in circumstances of this description so often, that a feeling of self-importance has been first generated, and this, by repetition, has gradually led to a habit of self-exaltation. Hence Cicero became an egotist, though he was evidently most anxious to conceal it; and Montaigne, who wrote *I* more frequently than any other letter of the alphabet; and Wolsey, whose motto of "I and my king," renders him an ex-

ample worthy the attention of every succeeding egotist. And why should thy name be omitted, Cobbett? thou prince of egots! thou whose every page breathes self-inspiration, and the most enviable degree of self-satisfaction. This, too, will partially account for the publication of so many trips and travels, conversations, reminiscences, autobiographies, and a variety of nameless effusions, "at the request of friends." And why will it not equally account for the slight degree of egotism attributable to honest John Bull? He boasts "a constitution which is the envy of surrounding nations, and the admiration of the world." And when it is remembered that many compliments to this effect have reached his patriotic ear, it is not strange that he should believe it. And when, in addition to this, the character and pretensions of his southern neighbours are remembered, it is not strange that he should so far throw off his natural reserve as to assert it, and thus turn egotist in self-defence.

I once knew a thorough-paced egotist, and I would not willingly part with the idea which I retain of him. It was the fulness, the perfection of his egotism alone which rendered I——s supportable. Had he been less egotistical he would have been intolerable, simply because he would not have appeared incurable. Had he occasionally descended from his stilts, his friends might have cherished a hope that he might be gradually taught to walk upon the earth; but he never disappointed their hopes, for he never excited any. Had he occasionally enjoyed a lucid interval, an attempt might have been made at exorcism; but the demon of egotism never left him, so that no one could hesitate to pronounce him an incurable. It was scarcely possible to offend him by any of the ordinary means of giving offence. Convict him of ignorance; his self-confidence remained unshaken: he felt assured "in his own mind," that he had read or heard to the effect of what he had stated; or, he was not in the habit of forming an opinion hastily, nor should he be hasty in relinquishing it. Politely request him to withdraw;

he evidently pitied you for defrauding yourself of the pleasure of his company. Tax him with egotism; he professed to hate nothing so cordially. But if it was difficult to displease him, it was a proverbial impossibility to put him on indifferent terms with himself. If he ever admitted, for a moment, that he could, in any single point, be more perfect than he was, it was done so blandly, with so many alleviating expressions and assurances of self-esteem, that he could not possibly be offended with himself; and, moreover, it was always the certain forerunner of invidious comparisons with those around him, and ended in torrents of self-gratulation. He was a happy instance of the principle of gravitation, for he was his own centre, and to that he tended with a constancy and force of determination which nothing external could ever disturb—

"And I——s, self-balanced, on his centre hung."

In conversation he quoted principally from himself, as a classical scholar would from the ancients; for few sayings had ever escaped from his lips which his memory had not embalmed with the most pious solicitude. In a doubtful question he seldom appealed to a higher authority than himself, which he did with the readiness and accuracy of a lawyer appealing to an old act of parliament; naming the date when he had formed the opinion or used the expression alluded to, together with the minutest circumstances which led to it. Few incidents of modern times could be mentioned in conversation of which he had not some knowledge, which called for the attention of the company. But whenever he condescended to refer to an incident which did not relate immediately to himself, he commonly atoned for the defect by giving a most detailed account of the several stages through which it had passed before it reached him—the depository of all knowledge and secrets, past, present, and to come. And in doing this, he generally managed to introduce, indirectly, a few names and circumstances, intended, if not calcu-

lated, to raise him in the opinion of those he addressed, so that, before he had concluded, the original incident was entirely lost sight of, and you found yourself brought back to that beginning and end of all things—*himself*. And yet there is not one of his acquaintance—friends, I believe, he has none—who would not devour his Memoirs, provided they were written by himself, as the choicest morsel which ever gratified their literary palate. But such a pleasure is not to be expected; for unless he could be present at the reading of every copy which might be sold, to announce himself as the hero, and to offer any little explanation which he might deem necessary, he would never think of the publication. Farewell, then, thou worthy archetype of the egotistical tribe, farewell! and accept, at parting, this feeble tribute to thy cherished memory. Never shall it be said that thou art self-irreverent; for seldom dost thou pronounce thy name but with an emphasis approaching to awe, or offer incense at any human shrine but thine own. Thou art self-canonized. Never can it be said that thou lackest a subject for conversation; for thou art so full of thyself, that it is only to address thee, and thou overflowest. Never, whilst thou livest, canst thou be taxed with forgetting the object which first engrossed thy affections; for thy "first love" was thyself, and thou wilt love on till death.

THE CHARACTER OF JOHN FOSTER, AS A WRITER.*

THE connexion between this subject and the spirit and manners of the age, will be apparent to those only who have not read the author in question. And even to such the connexion may not be made apparent. I might assume, for this purpose, that most writers have read "Foster's Essays," and infer that most readers have felt the effects of it. It might indeed require some skill to prove the truth of this remark in its unqualified state; but provided it were dealt with fairly, no modification would destroy its identity. It may be as difficult to apprehend the relation between his mind, as an author, and yours, as a reader of this periodical, as for an untutored mind to understand the connexion between the two great elements of nature—water and fire. It is, however, more than poetically correct, that,—

> "The sun that light imparts to all, receives
> From earth his alimental recompence
> In humid exhalations; and at even
> Sups with the ocean."

And it is evident to the reflecting mind, that a reciprocity equally real is traceable between the remotest parts of the intellectual world. Were a man, whose mental energy and tastes somewhat resembled those of our

* There is a mournful interest in presenting this article to the eye of the reader, now that its distinguished subject has closed his eyes on earth, and passed to the regions of immortality. Some years after he had written this paper, Dr. H. became acquainted with Foster, and strong mutual friendship was the result. Though they had minds, in some particulars, exceedingly dissimilar, each could see and admire the excellences of the

author, (excepting a few points of difference, we might name such a man as Dr. Johnson,) to sit down this evening to the perusal of "Essays," it is not to be supposed that his mind would be affected in any other way than by a deep feeling of pleasure and admiration. His own mental habitudes, having, by time and exercise, become so permanent, that nothing short of natural decay or death could change them. But even this feeling of admiration, excited as it would be by the exhibition of truths brought out from obscurity to which custom had consigned them, invested with new powers of attraction, skilfully disentangled from the network of sophistry, or triumphing over antagonist errors, must be attended by a corresponding effect on many of his subsequent thoughts, and sympathies, and expressions, on the same subjects. One of the most likely modes, perhaps, in which this effect would discover itself, would be by pronouncing on the author, in conversation, an extravagant eulogy.* Were a mind of powers somewhat inferior to those of the author, to read his productions with congenial views, the effect produced would probably be, that of a wish to resemble, without the appearance of attempting it.

other. One of the last notes I received from Dr. H. before I crossed the Atlantic, expressed his grief at the removal of the distinguished Essayist, and his hope that no mean man would undertake his biography. I rejoice to learn that a *complete* edition of his works, with a memoir of his life, may shortly be expected from the united pens of two of his intimate friends, fully equal to the task. In the mean time, I would refer the readers of this volume who may be able to gain access to it, to an able sketch of Foster's intellectual character in the London Patriot, which I happen to know is from the powerful pen of my highly talented and valued friend, the Rev. Dr. Campbell, of that city. Ed.

* Such as, "his thoughts deserve and require to be communicated in the language of another world." A near approach to the hyperbolical, it is true; but such substantially is reported to have been an expression used in reference to the author in question, by a living writer and preacher of eminence, whose style, it is presumed, would go far towards suppressing, in any who are acquainted with it, the desire of an importation of solar or lunar vocabularies, and to reconcile them to the language of *our own* planet.

This feeling would, insensibly perhaps, but inevitably steal into his pen, and for a time affect its movements. I could, on warrantable grounds, point out three illustrations of this remark. In one of them, the writer, it would appear, was fascinated by the *figures* of *the essayist;* and whether owing to a defective talent of appropriation, or the curse of a memory too retentive, or the fear of mutilating what he could not improve, he has carefully removed as many of them as he deemed desirable; and, as the fates would have it, has given them a silent and unhonoured burial in his own *tome.* He evidently does not believe in the doctrine of literary transubstantiation. Were the productions of the author read by an ardent youth, whose mind had not yet acquired a character, the probability is, that he would take from them impressions on some subjects never to be obliterated, though their origin might be soon forgotten. So that whenever he approaches these subjects afterwards, he will always find the author there before him. He will never again be able to revisit them alone. But it cannot be necessary to multiply remarks on this subject.

The peculiar characteristics of Mr. Foster, as a writer, are energy and originality. Some, indeed, may be disposed to make considerable deductions from his claims to *mental* originality, and to transfer them to his peculiar style of composition. And it must be admitted that passages might be pointed out, in which, as in Tom Thumb's alphabet, there is a great deal of straining and effort to express *a*, *b*, *c*. And there are other passages which remind us of Voltaire's expression, that language was given us to conceal our thoughts. But these are few, and scarcely worth notice. Where his style is obscure, the reader may commonly obtain a glimpse of the idea, as of a mountain partially veiled in mist, sufficient to satisfy him that he is still in the presence of grandeur. Where it is laboured and complicated, it is generally the evident result of a herculean struggle to drag some powerful and untractable thought to the light, and to make it to

do homage to the subject; and the reader feels grateful that so much trouble has been apparently taken, and pleased that the effort has been crowned with so much success. But for an occasional sentence of this description, you are presented with paragraphs and pages of profound but transparent writing, rolling onward with the majestic and uninterrupted progress of a river. His style, probably, never knew the puerilities of a juvenile writer, never exhibited marks of carelessness, nor of mere attempt. Its faults, like its beauties, are those of a writer not to be deterred from embodying the most impalpable ideas, and, at the same time, determined, as far as language can go, to be understood and felt. It is a style which few could aim to imitate with impunity, but even its peculiarities are consecrated by the thought which they enshrine, and render it, probably, the only adequate representative of the mind which created them.

From these remarks it must be evident that our author is not to be consulted for *light reading*. If taken up, and glanced at cursorily, the eye may trace, page after page, with as little mental advantage as would be derived from allowing it to wander over the same space occupied by hieroglyphics;— it might recognise most of the signs, but to understand the things signified requires the application of the mind. But, in the present day, when so many aim to furnish not only "reading made easy," but thinking likewise, the majority of readers would probably discard our author as imposing on them too severe a condition. He requires attention; but he employs no artifice to beguile them into it. They must knit their forehead at the very first sentence, and preserve their gravity unrelaxed till they have reached the last. His vein of thought may be unusually rich, but it lies too far beneath the surface for their resolution to follow him. They might stay above, for a short time, in the hope of catching a few indistinct sounds from the depths below, but wearied with the unusual effort of attention, they would soon imagine he was bewildered and lost, and leave him to his fate.

Whatever estimate, however, might be formed of our author by a great proportion of mere readers, if original combination of thought, and striking illustrations, and a complete mastery of his subject, possess any merit, he cannot be perused without being admired. It would be but a small part of his praise to say that he dignifies and illuminates whatever he touches, or even that he frequently surprises and delights by his powers of creation and discovery. He is peculiarly happy in exercising that great prerogative of genius which renovates the trite, and invests the familiar with interest. The spear of Ithuriel, and the voice of him who stood in the valley of dry bones, seem, in a figurative sense, to be equally at his command. His mind is a crucible, in which the *debased* is reduced to its elements; and a mould, in which the mutilated and effaced take their original shape and impression. He brings to his subject an intimate acquaintance with the various states of the human mind, especially its irreligious tastes and aversions. These he examines and amplifies with all the conscious security of one who knows that he can expose and trample on them at pleasure. And after placing them in a light far more imposing than the generality of their advocates could place them, he shows how completely they are at the mercy of a powerful mind "valiant for the truth." And then his peculiar mode of aggravating his representations, of torturing his antagonist with fearful doubts, of sternly persevering in his appeals and questions, and of returning again and again to the subject with the same and even increased vigour and hostility, until he has silenced and overwhelmed him, leaves the mind of the religious reader in a state of exulting admiration. One might have felt satisfied before that these tastes and aversions were irreligious, but the mind is delighted that they can be so clearly shown to be so, and that so much can be *said* for religion. In short, one feels a persuasion that it must be impossible ever to doubt on the subject again.

Mr. Foster is remarkable for his illustrations. In

this department it must be acknowledged he is highly original and happy. He lays the most remote, and unpromising, and familiar objects, under contribution with facility and success. Like the attendant spirits of some potent magician, they come from all elements and worlds to do his bidding. His images from the *supernatural* are especially striking. And, indeed, there are numerous indications in his writings, that his imagination is frequent in its communion with the mysterious and the invisible. He impresses one with the idea that a mind which apprehends so vividly "the powers of the world to come," will, at length, enter that world as a scene comparatively familiar,—that he must be rapidly exhausting its sources of wonder by anticipation. Irony, though it may not be a favourite weapon, is yet, in his hands, a most efficient one. Whenever he employs it, the reader may aptly think of Hercules playing with his club; or recall to mind the scene in which Sampson made sport for the Philistines. And, in either case, he would not be less indisposed to smile, than he would at the grave irony and biting sarcasms of the author,—even when *it is all over*. Irony is a mask, and whenever he puts it on he looks terrific. It cannot, and it need not, be concealed, that his pages are not unfrequently of a sombre hue. Not that he is at all capable of that gloomy misanthropy which can gorge itself only midst scenes of human misery; or that he makes the slightest approach to that whining sentimentalism which confounds imaginary with real evil, and which knows nothing of benevolence beyond sighs and tears. The peculiarity to which we allude is evidently owing to no incapacity for enjoyment, nor to any insensibility to the value, and efficacy, and ultimate triumph of that mighty power by which Supreme Benevolence can "subdue all things unto itself." It arises from a keen perception of moral evil, and a vivid antipathy against its influence. Hence it is discoverable principally when he is unmasking hypocrisy, disenchanting infatuation from its slumbers, or deploring the desperate per-

severance with which sin contends for its prey, and the threatening aspect with which it slowly retires from the conflict. On these topics he often appears to have consulted the roll of Ezekiel, and to have caught "the spirit and power of Elias."

In closing these remarks, allow me, reader, to intimate that many of them are especially, though not exclusively, applicable to the Essay which Mr. Foster has given to the public as introductory to "Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." If you wish to enjoy a high intellectual and religious treat, read that Essay. And if your religious concern be not increased, and your principles fortified, by the perusal, you will be free to confess that the blame rests not with the author.

MEMOIR OF MRS. HARRIS.

Mrs. Mary Ann Harris, born July 19th, 1815, was the daughter of W. Wrangham, Esq., of Epsom, Surry. Characterized from childhood by great docility and affectionateness of disposition, and attending the public means of grace, she early became the subject of that Divine teaching which maketh wise unto salvation. As soon as her great self-diffidence would permit, she became a member of the congregational church at Epsom, then under the pastoral care of him who, in July, 1838, had the happiness of becoming her husband.

Up to the period of her marriage, she had been, for a considerable time, the devoted teacher of a class of children in the Epsom chapel Sunday school; meeting them regularly and punctually twice every Lord's day. Her love for the young induced her to take a lively interest in every thing which related to their welfare; and, on her removal to Cheshunt, gladly would she have resumed, had circumstances permitted, her favourite occupation in the duties of a Sunday school.

The quiet and even tenor of her wedded life, and the cheerful equanimity of her temper, prevented the occurrence of any thing calcuated to move and to strike by the recital; but, for the same reason, her sudden departure will be felt most deeply and permanently by those who knew her best. Her presence was ever felt like that of the quiet dew and the cheerful light—simply by the sunny enjoyment which it diffused around. Entirely unconscious of her own attractiveness, she was content simply with not having wounded or offended, where at the very time she was

exciting the strongest esteem; and yet was she ever ready to point out and enlarge on the excellences of those with whom she mingled: in 'lowliness of mind esteeming others better than herself.' Transparent as the day, she was confided in as soon as seen; for to see her, was to know her;—and warm in her affections, she lived and moved in the happy little circle of which she formed a part, only to love and to be loved.

But it was, as it ought to be, in the sphere of domestic life that she appeared to the greatest advantage; finding in its ordinary duties scope for the practice of many virtues, and in its ever-recurring scenes a variety and freshness of pleasure which promised never to be exhausted. If, like Martha, she was ever careful (not troubled) about many things, it was only that afterwards, like Mary, she might sit in quiet at the feet of Christ. Most truly might it be said that the Bible was her favourite book. Often would she sit perusing it by the hour together; and, on the Lord's-day, for hours; breaking silence only to ask a question on the subject of her reading, or rising only to consult a Commentary.

For some months previous to the event which occasioned her death, she had entertained the apprehension of its fatal termination. Her habitual cheerfulness, however, wasbut little, if at all, affected by the anticipation. In patience she possessed her soul. The principal effect appeared to be, the more rapid development of her character, intellectual and religious. Especially was this apparent in her deepening concern or the welfare of those around her; a concern which showed itself at times, when in conversation respecting them, in tears, lest they should be neglecting the great salvation. In the prospective usefulness of the newly-formed society of which she was treasurer, she felt much delight. Her last act, on the evening prior to her dissolution, was to arrange the little details of her office. Whatsoever of this kind her hands found to do, she did it with all her might.

On the Lord's-day morning she was occupied in the *perusal* of the word of God, and of a volume of dis-

courses by Mr. Binney, on "The Practical Power of Faith," by which she expressed herself unusually pleased and benefitted. About six o'clock in the evening, though the hour of "travail" evidently approached, she begged me not to absent myself from the house of God, on her account; but desired, that if an interval offered, I would read the Scriptures and offer prayer with her after my return. By a little after eight, however, she had given birth to a fine little girl; and on my approaching her, at her request, and saying, "God has been very good, my love, in bringing you through the crisis, so quickly and safely;" "Oh, yes," said she, "never shall I be able to be sufficiently grateful for his goodness." Little, at that moment, did she herself, or any one around her, expect that she was so soon to be transported to that blessed state where gratitude finds the harp and the voice which on earth it had wanted to pour itself forth in an adequate song of praise. Between three and four hours after—hours of agony—agony borne with uncomplaining patience—but agony which exhausted her vital powers—she suddenly and peacefully, with a smile on her face, sunk into the sleep of death. "So," in the language of a hymn which she was admiring the Lord's-day evening before—

> "So fades a summer cloud away;
> So sinks the gale when storms are o'er;
> So gently shuts the eye of day;
> So dies a wave along the shore."

Numerous and affecting are the lessons which this Divine dispensation conveys. But it is not for the hand which has traced these lines, to point out those lessons to others, at least for the present, so much as to interpret and take them to himself. May the God under whose "mighty hand" he is now smarting, graciously help him in all humility and submission so to do.

MY PROGRESS IN ERROR,

AND RECOVERY TO TRUTH.

OR, A TOUR THROUGH UNIVERSALISM, UNITARIANISM, AND SKEPTICISM.

Second Thousand.

Extract of a letter from Prof. Stuart, Andover.

"GENTLEMEN:—I have received a copy of 'My Progress in Error,' and read it with attention and much interest. I take the liberty to say, that in my judgment, the author of that book has written a plain and unvarnished account of the operations not only of his own mind, but of many others. The author has gone through the whole, without personal abuse of any body, and without any slanderous insinuations. It seems to me, that what he has said about the operations of Unitarian sentiments, he has been compelled to say by a regard to truth. In fact, I regard the book as a remarkable example of prudent forbearance, as to stigmatizing either opponents or their sentiments. I predict it will be found fault with, and violently attacked. But in my humble opinion, the reason of this will be, that the author has drawn a true likeness of so many; and when this is held up to public view, it is not a very pleasing portrait. Who likes to be seen in a forbidding picture? The book will be read, notwithstanding newspaper criticism; and if I do not miscalculate greatly, it will aid much in opening the eyes of the public, as the workings and evasions of a skeptical spirit. Bid the author of it God speed.

"Your friend and obedient servant, M. STUART."

Opinions of the Press.

"In many of the passages we almost fancied that the writer had been sketching a history of our own 'progress in error,' so true is the history, and so similar the feelings of those who are led away in the morning of life, into the dark and dreary path of religious error. We should be glad to have this book placed in the hands of every young man whose mind is unsettled upon the question of experimental religion, and especially of those who are *trying* to believe the doctrine of Universalism."—*Christian Secretary.*

"It is written in a bold and comprehensive style. We doubt not it will find numerous readers in the community, and may serve as a chart to guide others in the progress of life."—*American Traveller.*

"We should be glad if a copy of the book could be put into the hands of every one who is disposed to cavil at the truth, and embrace error."—*Phil. Baptist Recorder.*

"In this work the author gives an affecting account of his downward course through the bewildering mazes of Universalism, Unitarianism, &c., giving but a living picture of the 'progress of error' of very many, who are almost imperceptibly led on from one step to another, until they are lost in the fearful labyrinth of infidelity. The author is candid in his manner, and forcible in his reasonings, and at last informs us of his being brought to a knowledge of the truth."—*N. H. Register.*

"The anonymous author of this book informs us that this is not a hasty production, more than ten years having elapsed since the last leading event which it records transpired; without his declaration, we might have thought it written as an offset to Mr. Brownson's Charles Ellwood. It is in fact a religious novel, and as such, is rather interesting. It was to us, for we read it through at one sitting."—*Boston Courier.*

"It cannot be doubted that it is admirably adapted to a wide-spread circulation, and salutary influence. Great good will result from the distribution of this work."—*Boston Recorder.*

LIFE OF PHILIP MELANCTHON.

COMPRISING AN ACCOUNT OF THE REFORMATION.

By F. A. Cox, D. D. L.L. D.

"This is a neat edition of a work, which has obtained in England a permanent reputation. The acquaintance, which many in this country have formed with its author, will induce them to read the book with increased interest. It is well written, in a style, which, though flowing and ornate, is not turgid. It shows all the learning which is appropriate to the subject, without an offensive display. The facts concerning Melancthon are detailed with clearness, and a lucid view is presented of the principal personages and events of the age. From no other book, within the same compass, could a better knowledge of the rise and progress of the Reformation be obtained. For this reason, as well as for the attractions which belong to the character of Melancthon, the book is valuable."—*Christian Review.*

ONESIMUS:

OR, THE APOSTOLIC DIRECTION TO CHRISTIAN MASTERS IN REFERENCE TO THEIR SLAVES.

By Evangelicus.

"We are glad to see this subject presented to the consideration of Christians, by itself, and without any reference to other questions that agitate the public mind; and we are glad that the writer has confined himself, in the argument, so closely to the law of love. The Essay is written with care, and in a kind and dispassionate spirit; and although it cannot be expected to unite the minds of all parties either here or at the South, it is well calculated to promote, wherever it is read, the author's object.—*Vermont Chronicle.*

"It is written in an excellent spirit, with close logic, and severe perspicuity, and is evidently from a practised pen."—*Zion's Herald.*

"Its whole spirit and tendency are the opposite of the anti-slavery publications, which have produced so much evil."—*Princeton Review.*

MEMOIR OF ROGER WILLIAMS,

The Founder of the State of Rhode Island.

By Rev. James D. Knowles.

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